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Lives of the queens of England, from the Norman conquest

Painted by J. Hayes, June, 1846.

Engd. by F. C. Lewis, Engr. to He

Agnes Strickland

LIVES

OF THE

QUEENS OF ENGLAND,

BY

AGNES STRICKLAND.

Berengaria received at Acre by Philip Augustus.

VOL. I.

LONDON.
HENRY COLBURN, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

DA

LIVES
OF THE
QUEENS OF ENGLAND

From the Norman Conquest.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM
OFFICIAL RECORDS & OTHER AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS,
PRIVATE AS WELL AS PUBLIC.

BY
AGNES STRICKLAND.

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> In old historic rolls, I opened."
> BEAUMONT.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND GREATLY AUGMENTED,
EMBELLISHED WITH
PORTRAITS OF EVERY QUEEN.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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1871.

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ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

TO

HER MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

OUR SOVEREIGN LADY QUEEN VICTORIA,

THE LIVES

OF

THE QUEENS OF ENGLAND

ARE, BY GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

Inscribed,

WITH FEELINGS OF PROFOUND RESPECT AND LOYAL AFFECTION,

BY HER MAJESTY'S FAITHFUL SUBJECT,

AND DEVOTED SERVANT,

AGNES STRICKLAND.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME

PAGE

PREFACE ix

INTRODUCTION 1

MATILDA OF FLANDERS, QUEEN OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR 21

MATILDA OF SCOTLAND, QUEEN OF HENRY I. . . . 106

ADELICIA OF LOUVAINE, SECOND QUEEN OF HENRY I. 166

MATILDA OF BOULOGNE, QUEEN OF STEPHEN 199

ELEANORA OF AQUITAINE, QUEEN OF HENRY II. . . 237

BERENGARIA OF NAVARRE, QUEEN OF RICHARD I. . . 294

ISABELLA OF ANGOULEME, QUEEN OF KING JOHN . . 328

ELEANOR OF PROVENCE, SURNAMED LA BELLE, QUEEN OF HENRY III. 356

ELEANORA OF CASTILE, SURNAMED THE FAITHFUL, FIRST QUEEN OF EDWARD I. 418

MARGUERITE OF FRANCE, SECOND QUEEN OF EDWARD I. 452

ISABELLA OF FRANCE, SURNAMED THE FAIR, QUEEN OF EDWARD II. 471

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT, QUEEN OF EDWARD III. . . 543

ANNE OF BOHEMIA, SURNAMED THE GOOD, FIRST QUEEN OF RICHARD II. 591

ILLUSTRATIONS

TO

THE FIRST VOLUME.

PORTRAIT OF MISS AGNES STRICKLAND..................*Frontispiece.*

BERENGARIA RECEIVED AT ACRE BY PHILIP AUGUSTUS,
(Described page 303.) *Vignette Title.*

MATILDA OF FLANDERS, QUEEN-CONSORT OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, from Montfauçon's Monumens..........................*page* 21
(Described page 93.)

MATILDA OF SCOTLAND, QUEEN-CONSORT OF HENRY I., from the Golden Book of St. Albans in the British Museum 106
(Described page 154.)

ADELICIA OF LOUVAINE, SECOND QUEEN OF HENRY I., from her Seal in the possession of Abel Smith, Esq., M.P. 166
(Described page 198.)

MATILDA OF BOULOGNE, QUEEN-CONSORT OF STEPHEN, from her contemporary Statue in Furness Abbey, Lancashire 199
(Described page 236.)

ELEANORA OF AQUITAINE, QUEEN-CONSORT OF HENRY II., from her Tomb at Fontevraud 237
(Described page 338.)

BERENGARIA OF NAVARRE, QUEEN-CONSORT OF RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION, from her Tomb in the Abbey of Espan 294
(Described page 327.)

ISABELLA OF ANGOULEME, QUEEN-CONSORT OF JOHN, from her Monument at Fontevraud 328
(Described page 354.)

ELEANOR OF PROVENCE, QUEEN-CONSORT OF HENRY III., taken from Painted Glass formerly at Strawberry Hill 356
(Described page 378.)

PAGE

ELEANORA OF CASTILE, FIRST QUEEN-CONSORT OF EDWARD I., from her Monument in Westminster Abbey 418
(Described page 445.)

MARGUERITE OF FRANCE, SECOND QUEEN OF EDWARD I., from her Statuette on the Tomb of John of Eltham (her great Nephew) in Westminster Abbey 452
(Described page 469.)

ISABELLA OF FRANCE, QUEEN-CONSORT OF EDWARD II., from her Statuette on the Tomb of John of Eltham (her son) in Westminster Abbey 471
(Described page 541.)

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT, QUEEN-CONSORT OF EDWARD III., from a contemporary Bust over the Triforium in Bristol Cathedral...... 543
(Described page 576.)

ANNE OF BOHEMIA, FIRST QUEEN-CONSORT OF RICHARD II., from her Monument in Westminster Abbey 591
(Described page 615.)

PREFACE.

Eleven years have elapsed since the first volume of these royal biographies issued from the press: fresh impressions of every successive volume have been repeatedly required, yet it was not till the completion of the undertaking that the work could be reprinted with perfect uniformity as a whole.

A revised edition, embodying the collections which have been brought to light since the appearance of earlier impressions, is now offered to the world, embellished with portraits of every Queen in the series, from authentic and properly verified sources. The actual degree of beauty represented is no positive criterion of the charms of the original, but depends in a great measure on the state of the arts, and the ability of the sculptor, limner, or painter, to depict a pleasing likeness. The drawings have been made expressly for this work by G. P. Harding, Esq., the antiquarian artist, whose reputation stands deservedly high.

Whatever improvements, however, may have been effected in the external form and fashion of our Queens, we never can contemplate them in their new costume with the same feelings with which we have been wont to recognise the well-thumbed copies of the first familiar editions, in the hands of gentle readers of all ages and degrees, on the decks of steamboats, in railroad carriages, and other places of general resort, where stranger links of the great chain of life and intelligence are accidentally drawn together for the journey of a day, never perchance to meet again. Not unfrequently on such occasions have we been obligingly offered a peep into "the new volume" by courteous fellow-travellers, unknown to us, who suspected not how intimately we were acquainted with its contents, far less how many a toilsome day and sleepless night it had cost us to trace out the actions and characteristics of many of the royal heroines of these biographies, of whom little beyond their names was previously known.

The personal histories of the Anglo-Norman, several of the Plantagenet, and even two or three of the Tudor and Stuart queen-consorts, were involved in scarcely less obscurity than those of their British and Anglo-Saxon predecessors. Dimly, however, as their memorials floated over the surface of general history, they afforded indubitable evidence that substantial matter connected with those shadows would, on diligent search, be discovered, as, indeed, the result has proved. Documentary historians alone can appreciate the difficulties, the expense, the injury to health, to say nothing of the sacrifice of more profitable literary pursuits, that have been involved in this undertaking. The hope that the Lives of the Queens of England might be regarded as a national undertaking, honourable to the female character, and generally useful to society, encouraged us to the completion of the task.

The historical biographer's business, however zealously and carefully performed in the first instance, when breaking unwrought ground, must be often repeated before all the widely-scattered and deeply-buried treasures of the Past can be collected together. Truth lies not on the substratum, but, as the wisdom of ages bears testimony, in a well, which only those who will take the trouble of digging deeply can find, although it be easy enough to draw when once the sealed-up fountain has been discovered and opened. This observation is peculiarly applicable to those documents which, after slumbering forgotten for centuries in their secret depositories, are at last brought forward, like incorruptible witnesses in a perplexing trial, to confute the subtleties of some specious barrister who has exerted the persuasive powers of eloquent language to establish falsehood. "Facts, not opinions," should be the historian's motto; and every person who engages in that difficult and responsible department of literature ought to bear in mind the charge which prefaces the juryman's oath,—"You shall truly and justly try this cause, you shall present no one from malice, you shall excuse no one from favour," &c., &c.

To such a height have some prejudices been carried, that it has been regarded as a species of heresy to record the evil as well as the good of persons who are usually made subjects of popular panegyric, and authors have actually feared in some cases to reveal the base metal which has been hidden beneath a meretricious gilding, lest they should provoke a host of assailants. It was not thus that the historians of Holy Writ performed their office. The sins of David and Solomon are recorded by them with stern fidelity and merited censure, for with the sacred annalists there is no compromise between truth and expediency. Expediency! perish the word, if guilt be covered and moral justice sacrificed to such considerations!

Nothing has been more fatal to the cause of truth than the school of historical essay, which, instead of communicating information, makes everything subservient to a political system, repudiates inconvenient facts as gossip, and imposes upon the defrauded reader declarations about the dignity of history, instead of laying before him a digest of its evidences. But take the proceedings in a court of justice,—a trial for murder, for example,—how minutely is every circumstance investigated, what trifles tend to the conviction of guilt and the establishment of innocence. How attentive is the judge to the evidence, how indifferent to the eloquence of the advocate. He listens to the depositions of the witnesses, he jots them down, he collates them in his tablets, he compares the first statements with the cross-examinations, he detects discrepancies, he cuts short verbiage, he allows no quibbles or prevarication, but keeps every one to the point. In summing up, he proves that all depends on the evidence, nothing on the pleadings; if he condescend to notice the arguments of the rival counsel, it is only to caution the jury against being unduly biassed by mere elocution—words, not facts. The duty of the historian, like that of the judge, is to keep to the facts, and not to go one tittle beyond the evidences, far less to suppress or pervert them.

Our Introduction contains brief notices of the ancient British and Saxon Queens. Their records are, indeed, too scanty to admit of any other arrangement.

This series of royal biographies is, however, confined to the lives of our mediæval queens, commencing with the consort of William the Conqueror, occupying that most interesting and important period of our national chronology, from the death of the last monarch of the Anglo-Saxon line, Edward the Confessor, in the year 1066, to the demise of the last sovereign of the royal house of Stuart, Queen Anne, in 1714. In this series of queens, thirty have worn the crown-matrimonial, and four the regal diadem of this realm.

What changes—what revolutions—what scenes of civil and religious strife—what exciting tragedies are *not* involved in the details of those four-and-thirty lives! They extend over six hundred and fifty-two years, such as the world will never see again—the ages of feudality, of chivalry, and romance—ages of splendour and misery, that witnessed the brilliant chimera of crusades, the more fatal triumphs of our Edwards and Henrys, in their reiterated attempts to annex the crown of France to that of England, and the national destitution and domestic woe that followed the lavish expenditure of English blood and treasure in a foreign land—the deadly feud of the rival Roses of York and Lancaster, which ended in the extinction of the name and male line of Plantagenet—the stupendous changes of public opinion that followed the accession of the house of Tudor to the throne, effecting first the overthrow of the feudal system, then of the Romish theocracy, leaving royalty to revel unchecked in a century of absolute despotism. After the crisis of the Reformation and the emancipation of England from the papal yoke, came the struggle of the middle classes for the assertion of their political rights, overpowering royalty for a time, and establishing a democracy under the name of a Commonwealth; which ended, as all democracies sooner or later must, in a military dictatorship, followed by the restoration of the monarchical government and a fever of loyal affection for the restored sovereign. Then came the slow but sure reaction of democracy and dissent against royalty and the established church, assisted by a no-popery panic—the Orange intrigues, encouraged by a pope, against the Roman-catholic sovereign James II.—the conflicting passions of the revolution of 1688—the expulsion of the male line of Stuart—the triumph of an oligarchy—the Dutch reign, the era of Continental wars, standing armies, national debt, and universal taxation—the contests between selfish parties and rival interests during the reign of Anne—and, finally, the happy establishment of a protestant succession, in the peaceful accession of the illustrious House of Brunswick to the throne of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland.

With this progressive chain of national events and changes have the royal ladies in our series of queenly biographies been inextricably linked. To use the words of Guizot, "Great events have acted on them, and they have acted according to the events." Such as they were in life we have endeavoured to portray them, both in good and ill, without regard to any other considerations than the development of the facts. Their sayings, their doings, their manners, their costume, will be found faithfully chronicled in this work, which also includes the most interesting of their letters: the orthography of these, as well as the extracts from ancient documents, have been modernised for the sake of perspicuity.

The materials for the lives of the Tudor and Stuart queens are of a more copious and important nature than the records of the consorts of our Anglo-Norman and Plantagenet sovereigns. We miss, indeed, the illuminated pages, and the no less picturesque details of the historians of the age of chivalry, rich in their quaint simplicity, for the last of the monastic chroniclers, John Rous, of Warwick, closed his labours with the blood-stained annals of the last of the Plantagenet kings.

A new school of history commences with sir Thomas More's Life of Richard III.; and we revel in the gorgeous descriptions of Hall and Holingshed, the characteristic anecdotes of the faithful Cavendish, the circumstantial narratives of Stowe and Speed, and other annalists of less distinguished names. It is, however, from the acts of the Privy Council, the Parliamentary Journals, and the unpublished Regal Records and MSS. in the State Paper Office, as well as from the treasures preserved in the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, at Paris, and the private MS. collections of historical families and gentlemen of antiquarian research, that our most important facts are gathered. State papers, autograph letters, and other important documents, which the antiquarian taste of the present age has drawn forth from the repositories where they have slumbered among the dust of centuries, have afforded their silent but incontrovertible evidence on matters illustrative of the private history of royalty, to enable writers who, unbiassed by the leaven of party spirit, deal in facts, not opinions, to unravel the tangled web of falsehood. Every person who has referred to original documents is aware that it is a work of time and patience to read the MSS. of the Tudor era. Those in the State Paper Office, and the Cottonian Library, have suffered much from accidents, and from the injuries of time. Water, and even fire, have partially passed over some; in others, the mildew has swept whole sentences from the page, leaving historical mysteries in provoking obscurity, and occasionally baffling the attempts of the most persevering antiquary to raise the shadowy curtain of the past.

The records of the Tudor queens are replete with circumstances of powerful interest, and rich in the picturesque costume of an age of pageantry and romance. Yet of some of these ladies so little beyond the general outline is known, that the lives of Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Katharine Howard, were for the first time opened to the public in this work.

Our earlier queens were necessarily members of the church of Rome, and there are only the biographies of five avowedly protestant queens in this series. Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, and Anne of Cleves died in communion with the church of

Rome. Katharine Parr is, therefore, our first protestant queen, and the nursing mother of the Reformation. There is only another protestant queen-consort, Anne of Denmark, in this series, and our three queens-regnant, Elizabeth, Mary II., and Anne. Undoubtedly these princesses would have been better women if their actions had been more conformable to the principles inculcated by the pure and apostolic doctrines of the church of England. Sincere friends of that church will not blame those who transfer the reproach, which political creedists have brought on their profession, from her to the individuals who have violated her precepts under the pretext of defending her interests.

The queens of England were not the shadowy queens of tragedy or romance, to whom imaginary words and deeds could be imputed to suit a purpose. They were the queens of real life, who exercised their own free will in the words they spoke, the parts they performed, the influence they exercised, the letters they wrote. They have left mute but irrefragable witnesses of what they were in their own deeds, for which they, and not their biographers, must stand accountable. To tamper with truth, for the sake of conventional views, is an imbecility not to be expected of historians. Events spring out of each other: therefore, either to suppress or give a false version of one, leads the reader into a complicated mass of errors, having the same effect as the spurious figure with which a dishonestly disposed school-boy endeavours to prove a sum that baffles his feeble powers of calculation. Ay, and it is as easily detected by those who are accustomed to verify history by the tests of dates and documents. It is, however, the doom of every writer who has had the fidelity to bring forward suppressed evidences, or the courage to confute long-established falsehoods, to be assailed, not only by the false but by the deluded, in the same spirit of ignorant prejudice with which Galileo was persecuted by the bigots of a darker age, for having ventured to demonstrate a scientific truth.

What was the result as regarded Galileo and his discoveries? Why, truly, the poor philosopher was compelled to ask pardon for having been the first to call attention to a fact which it would now be regarded as the extreme of folly to doubt! Neither the clamour of the angry supporters of the old opinion, nor the forced submission of the person who had exposed its fallacy, had in the least affected the fact, any more than the assertion that black is white can make evil good or good evil. Opinions have their date, and change with circumstances, but facts are immutable. We have endeavoured to develop those connected with the biographies of the queens of England with uncompromising fidelity, without succumbing to the passions and prejudices of either sects or parties, the peevish ephemerides of a day, who fret and buzz out their brief term of existence, and are forgotten. It is not for such we write: we labour in a high vocation, even that of enabling the lovers of truth and moral justice to judge of our queens and their attributes—not according to conventional censure or praise, but according to that unerring test, prescribed not by "carnal wisdom, but by heavenly wisdom coming down from above," which has said, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

We have related the parentage of every queen, described her education, traced the influence of family connexions and national habits on her conduct, both public and private, and given a concise outline of the domestic, as well as the general history of her times, and its effects on her character, and we have done so with singleness of heart, unbiassed by selfish interests or narrow views. If we have borne false witness in any instance, let those who bring accusations bring also proofs of their assertions. A queen is no ordinary woman, to be condemned on hear-say evidence; she is the type of the heavenly bride in the beautiful 45th Psalm—"Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are pure, and of good report" in the female character, ought to be found in her. A queen-regnant occupies a still higher position—she is God's vicegerent upon earth, and is therefore to be held in reverence by his people. In proportion to her power, so are her responsibilities. Of the four queens-regnant, whose lives are narrated in this series of biographies, one only, queen Elizabeth, was possessed of absolute power. Her sister Mary I. had placed herself under the control of a cruel and tyrannical husband, who filled her council and her palace with his creatures, and rendered her the miserable tool of his constitutional bigotry. The case of the second Mary was not unlike that of the first, as regarded the marital tutelage under which she was crushed. Anne, when she designated herself "a crowned slave," described her position only too accurately.

The Lives of the Tudor and Stuart female sovereigns form an important portion of this work; there is much that is new to the general reader in each, in the shape of original anecdotes and inedited letters, especially in those of the royal Stuart sisters, Mary II. and queen Anne. The biographies of those princesses have hitherto been written, either in profound ignorance of their conduct on the part of the writer, or else, the better to work out general principles, in the form of vague outlines full of high-sounding eulogiums, in which all personal facts were omitted. We have endeavoured to supply the blanks, by tracing out their actions, and compelling them to bear witness of themselves by their letters—such letters as they permitted to survive them. Strange mysteries might have been unfolded, if biographers had been permitted to glance over the contents of those papers which queen Mary spent a lonely vigil in her closet in destroying, when she felt the dread fiat had gone forth: "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." The great marvel regarding the secret correspondence of royalty at such epochs, is not that so much is destroyed, but that any should survive.

The materials for the biography of Mary Beatrice of Modena, the consort of James II., are chiefly derived from the unpublished documents of the period. Many of these, and indeed the most important, are locked up in the secret archives of France, papers that are guarded with such extreme jealousy from the curiosity of foreigners, that nothing less than the powerful introduction of M. Guizot, when premier of France, could have procured access to that collection. Through the kindness and liberality of that accomplished statesman-historian, every facility for research and transcription wa granted during our residence in Paris in 1844. The result was fortunate beyond our most sanguine expectations, in the discovery of a very important mass of inedited royal letters and contemporary records connected with the personal history of the expatriated Stuarts. Not the least curious of these, are the disjointed fragments of a quaint circumstantial diary kept by one of the nuns of Chaillot, in the years 1711, 12, 13, and 14, who, with minuteness and simplicity worthy of Samuel Pepys himself, has recorded the proceedings and table-talk of the exiled queen during her occasional abode in that nunnery. This "convent log-book," as it has been pleasantly termed by one of our talented reviewers, was, of course, never intended for protestant eyes, for it admits us fully within the grate, and puts us in possession of things that were never intended to be whispered without the walls of that mysterious little world; and though, as a whole, it would be somewhat weary work to go through the detail of the devotional exercises, fasts, and other observances practised by the sisters of St. Marie de Chaillot and their royal visitor, it abounds in characteristic traits and anecdotes. Much additional light is thrown on the personal history of the exiled royal family, by the incidents that have been there chronicled from the queen's own lips. The fidelity of the statements is verified by their strict agreement with other inedited documents, of the existence of which the sister of Chaillot could not have been aware. Besides these treasures, we were permitted to take transcripts of upwards of two hundred original autograph letters of this queen, being her confidential correspondence for the last thirty years of her life, with her friend Françoise Angelique Priolo, and others of the nuns of Chaillot. To this correspondence we are indebted for many touching pictures of the domestic life of the fallen queen and her children, during their residence in the chateau of St. Germains. Some of the letters have been literally steeped in the tears of the royal writer, especially those which she wrote after the battle of La Hogue, during the absence of King James, when she was in hourly expectation of the birth of her youngest child, and, finally, in her last utter desolation.

The friendly assistance rendered by M. Michelet, in the prosecution of our researches, in the Archives of the Kingdom of France, demands our grateful acknowledgments. We are also indebted, through the favour of M. Guizot, and the courtesy of M. Mignet and M. Dumont, for inedited documents and royal letters from the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères;* nor must the great kindness of M. Champollion, in facilitating our researches in the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, be forgotten, nor the service rendered by him in the discovery and communication of a large portfolio of inedited Stuart papers, from the archives of St. Germain's.

The lives of the Queens of England necessarily close with that of queen Anne. She is the last Queen of Great Britain of whom historical biography can be written,—at least, consistently with the plan of a work based on documents, and illustrated by original letters.

Grateful acknowledgments are herewith offered to the noble and learned friends who have assisted us in the progress of the "Lives of the Queens of England," by granting us access to national and family archives, and favouring us with the loan of documents and rare books, besides many other courtesies, which have been continued with unwearied kindness, to the conclusion of the work. Among these we wish to notice in particular the names of our departed friends, the late Sir Harris Nicolas, the historian of The Orders of Knighthood; Henry Howard, Esq., of Corby; the late Sir William Wood, Garter king-of-arms; Mr. Beltz, Lancaster Herald; Sidney Taylor, Esq.; and Monsieur Buchon, the learned editor of the Burgundian Chronicles; Sir Cuthbert Sharp; Alexander Macdonald, Esq., of the Register House, Edinburgh; R. K. Porter, and Miss Jane Porter.

Of those who happily still adorn society, we have the honour to acknowledge our obligations in various ways connected with the documentary portion of this work, to the Baroness Willoughby de Eresby, the Dukes of Devonshire and Somerset, Lady Mary Christopher, the Countess of Stradbroke, Sir John and Lady Matilda Maxwell, of Polloc; Lady

Georgiana Bathurst, the Lady Petre, Dowager Lady Bedingfield, Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., of Middlehill; D. E. Davey, Esq., of Ufford; Dr. Lingard; the Rev. G. C. Tomlinson, the Rev. Joseph Hunter; John Adey Repton, Esq., James Orchard Halliwell, Esq., John Bruce, Esq., Thomas Saunders, Esq., City Comptroller; Rev. H. Symonds; Thomas Garrard, Esq., Town Clerk of Bristol; Madame Colmache; C. H. Howard, Esq., M.P.; John Riddell, Esq., of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh; Francis Home, Esq., Deputy Sheriff of Linlithgow; Miss Mary Home; Frederick Devon, Esq., of the Chapter-house; J. H. Glover, Esq., her Majesty's librarian at Windsor Castle; Sir F. Madden; Sir Charles Young, Garter king-of-arms; W. Courthope, Esq.; and the Rev. Eccles Carter, of Bristol Cathedral.

Nor must we omit this opportunity of returning thanks to our unknown or anonymous correspondents, who have favoured us with transcripts and references, which have, occasionally, proved very useful; and if they have not, in every instance, been either new to us, or available in the course of the work, have always been duly appreciated as friendly attentions, and tokens of good-will.

We cannot take our leave of the gentle readers who have kindly cheered us on our toilsome track, by the unqualified approbation with which they have greeted every fresh volume, without expressing the satisfaction it has given us to have been able to afford mingled pleasure and instruction to so extensive a circle of friends—friends who, though personally unknown to us, have loved us, confided in our integrity, brought our Queens into their domestic circles, associated them with the sacred joys of home, and sent them as pledges of affection to their dear ones far away, even to the remotest corners of the world. We should be undeserving of the popularity with which this work has been honoured, if we could look upon it with apathy; but we regard it as God's blessing on our labours, and their sweetest reward.

P.S.—I have used the plural *we*, because I speak not only in my own name, but in that of my sister, whose share in this work I am especially desirous to notice to the world, although she refuses to allow her name to appear on the title page with that of

AGNES STRICKLAND.

REYDON HALL, SUFFOLK,
June, 1851.

LIVES

OF

THE QUEENS OF ENGLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

"The queen of England," says that learned commentator on the laws and constitution of this country, Blackstone, "is either queen-regnant, queen-consort, or queen-dowager." The first of these is a female sovereign reigning in her own right, and exercising all the functions of regal authority in her own person,—as in the case of her present majesty queen Victoria, who ascended the throne, not only by rightful inheritance and the consent of the people, but also in full accordance with the ancient British custom, noticed by Tacitus in these remarkable words: "Solent fœminarum ductu bellare, et sexum in imperiis non discernere."[1]

No other princess has, however, been enthroned in this land under such auspicious circumstances as our present sovereign lady. Mary I. was not recognised without bloodshed. Elizabeth's title was disputed. Mary II. was only a sovereign in name, and as much dependent on the will of her royal husband as a queen-consort. The archbishop of Canterbury forfeited the primacy of England for declining either to assist at her coronation, or to take the oaths. The same scruples of conscience withheld the nonjuring bishops and clergy, and many of the nobility and gentry of England, from performing their homage either to her, or to queen Anne. Not one of those four queens, therefore, was crowned with the unanimous consent of her people. But the rapturous acclamations that drowned the pealing of the bells and the thunders of the artillery, at the recognition of our beloved liege lady queen Victoria, in Westminster-abbey, can never be forgotten by those who then heard the voices of a united nation uplifted in assent. I was present, and felt the massy walls of the abbey thrill, from base to tower, with the mighty sound, as the burst of loyal enthusiasm, within that august sanctuary, was echoed by the thronging multitude without, hailing her queen by universal suffrage.

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[1] Life of Agricola.

A queen-consort has many exemptions and minute prerogatives. For instance, she pays no toll, nor is she liable to any amercement in any court. In all cases, however, where the law has not expressly declared her exempted, she is upon the same footing with other subjects, being to all intents and purposes the king's subject, and not his equal.[1] The royal charters, in ancient times, were frequently signed by the queen as well as by the king; yet this was not in the quality of a coadjutor in the authority by which the grant was made, but evidently in the capacity of a witness only, and on account of her high rank she was doubtless a most important one. In point of security of her life and person, the queen-consort is put on the same footing with the king. It is equally treason (by the statute of the 25th Edward III.) "to compass or imagine the death of our lady the king's companion, as of the king himself."[2]

"The queen is entitled to some pecuniary advantages, which form her a distinct revenue," continues Blackstone, "one of which, and formerly the most important, was the *aurum reginæ*, or queen-gold, a royal revenue belonging to every queen-consort during her marriage with the king, and due from every person who hath made a voluntary offering or fine to the king amounting to ten marks or upwards; and it is due in the proportion of one-tenth part more, over and above the entire offering or fine made to the king,[1] and becomes an actual debt of record to the queen's majesty by the mere recording of the fine. Thus, if an hundred marks of silver be given to the king to take in mortmain, or to have a fair, market, park, chase, or free-warren, then the queen was entitled to ten marks in silver, or rather its equivalent—one mark in gold, by the name of queen-gold, or *aurum reginæ*.

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[1] Blackstone's Commentaries: Rights of Persons.

[2] Ibid. book i. chap. iv.

Another very ancient perquisite of the queen-consort, as mentioned by old writers and quoted by the learned roundhead Prynne,[2] (who after the Restoration became, when keeper of the Tower records, a most zealous stickler for the privileges of the queens of England,) is, that on the taking of a whale on the coasts, which is a royal fish, it shall be divided between the king and queen; the head only being the king's property, and the tail the queen's. The reason of this whimsical division, as assigned by our ancient records, was to furnish the queen's wardrobe with whalebone.[3] Now, this shrewd conjecture of the learned civilian quoted by Blackstone may be considered as sufficient authority by barristers and judges to settle the point, but as it relates to matters on which ladies, generally speaking, possess more critical knowledge than lawyers or antiquaries, we beg to observe that the royal garments-feminine would be poorly provided with the article alluded to if her majesty depended on this contingency alone for her supply, as the peculiar kind of whalebone used in a lady's dress grows in the head of the fish, which, as we have seen, falls to the share of the king.

It is well known that the ward of Queenhithe derives its name from the circumstance of vessels unlading at that little harbour paying tolls to the queen of Henry III., Eleanor of Provence. The covetous disposition of this princess induced her to use her influence with the king, in order to compel every vessel freighted with corn, or other valuable lading, to land at her quay, to increase the revenue she drew from this source. It is well for the interests of trade and commerce that our latter queens have been actuated by very different feelings towards the subjects of their royal husbands, than the sordid selfishness practised by this princess.

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[1] Prynne's Aurum Reginæ. [2] Aurum Reginæ. [3] Bracton. Britton.

The queen-regnant, in addition to the cares of government, has to preside over all the arrangements connected with female royalty, which, in the reign of a married king, devolve on the queen-consort; she has, therefore, more to occupy her time and attention than a king, for whom the laws of England expressly provide that he is not to be troubled with his wife's affairs, like an ordinary husband. There have been but three unmarried kings of England,—William Rufus, Edward V., and Edward VI. The two last died at tender ages; but the 'Red King' was a determined bachelor, and his court, unrestrained by the presence and beneficial influence of a queen, was the focus of profaneness and profligacy.

The earliest British queen named in history is Cartismandua, who, though a married woman, appears to have been the sovereign of the Brigantes, reigning in her own right. This was about the year 50.

Boadicea, or Bodva, the warrior queen of the Iceni, succeeded her deceased lord, king Prasutagus, in the regal office. Speed gives us a curious print of one of her coins in his Chronicle. The description of her dress and appearance on the morning of the battle that ended so disastrously for the royal Amazon and her country, quoted from a Roman historian, is remarkably picturesque:—"After she had dismounted from her chariot, in which she had been driving from rank to rank to encourage her troops, attended by her daughters and her numerous army she proceeded to a throne of marshy turfs, apparelled, after the fashion of the Romans, in a loose gown of changeable colours, under which she wore a kirtle very thickly plaited, the tresses of her yellow hair hanging to the skirts of her dress. About her neck she wore a chain of gold, and bore a light spear in her hand, being of person tall, and of a comely, cheerful, and modest countenance; and so awhile she stood, pausing to survey her army, and being regarded with reverential silence, she addressed to them an impassioned and eloquent speech on the wrongs of her country."

The overthrow and death of this heroic princess took place in the year 60.

There is every reason to suppose that the noble code of laws called the Common Law of England, usually attributed to Alfred, were by him derived from the laws first established by a British queen. "Martia," says Holinshed,[1] "surnamed Proba, or the Just, was the widow of Gutiline king of the Britons, and was left protectress of the realm during the minority of her son. Perceiving much in the conduct of her subjects which needed reformation, she devised sundry wholesome laws, which the Britons, after her death, named the Martian statutes. Alfred caused the laws of this excellently learned princess, whom all commended for her knowledge of the Greek tongue, to be established in the realm." These laws, embracing trial by jury and the just descent of property, were afterwards collated and still farther improved by Edward the Confessor, and were as pertinaciously demanded from the successors of William the Conqueror by the Anglo-Normans, as by their Anglo-Saxon subjects.

Rowena, the wily Saxon princess, who, in an evil hour for the unhappy people of the land, became the consort of Vortigern in the year 450, is the next queen whose name occurs in our early annals. Guiniver, the golden-haired queen of Arthur, and her faithless successor and namesake, have been so mixed up with the tales of the romance poets and troubadours, that it would be difficult to verify a single fact connected with either.

Among the queens of the Saxon Heptarchy we hail the nursing mothers of the Christian faith in this island, who firmly established the good work begun by the British lady Claudia, and the empress Helena. The first and most illustrious of these queens was Bertha, the daughter of Cherebert king of Paris, who had the glory of converting her pagan husband, Ethelbert, the king of Kent, to that faith of which she was so bright an ornament, and of planting the first Christian church at Canterbury. Her daughter, Ethelburga, was in like manner the means of inducing her valiant lord, Edwin king of Northumbria, to embrace the Christian faith. Eanfled, the daughter of this illustrious pair, afterwards the consort of Oswy king of Mercia, was the first individual who received the sacrament of baptism in Northumbria.

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[1] Holinshed's Description of England, vol. i. p. 298; 4to ed.

In the eighth century, the consorts of the Saxon kings were excluded, by a solemn law, from sharing in the honours of royalty, on account of the crimes of the queen Edburga, who had poisoned her husband, Brihtric king of Wessex;[1] and even when Egbert consolidated the kingdoms of the Heptarchy into an empire, of which he became the Bretwalda, or sovereign, his queen Redburga was not permitted to participate in his coronation. Osburga, the first wife of Ethelwulph, and the mother of the great Alfred, was also debarred from this distinction; but when, on her death, or, as some historians say, her divorce, Ethelwulph espoused the beautiful and accomplished Judith, the sister of the emperor of the Franks, he violated this law by placing her beside him on the King's-bench, and allowing her a chair of state, and all the other distinctions to which her high birth entitled her. This afforded a pretence to his ungallant subjects for a general revolt, headed by his eldest son Ethelbald, by whom he was deprived of half his dominions. Yet Ethelbald, on his father's death, was so captivated by the charms of the fair cause of his parricidal rebellion, that he outraged all Christian decency by marrying her.

The beautiful and unfortunate Elgiva, the consort of Edwy, has afforded a favourite theme for poetry and romance; but the partisans of her great enemy, Dunstan, have so mystified her history, that it would be no easy matter to give an authentic account of her life. Elfrida, the fair and false queen of Edgar, has acquired an infamous celebrity for her remorseless hardness of heart. She did not possess the talents necessary to the accomplishment of her design of seizing the reins of government after she had assassinated her unfortunate stepson at Corfe-castle, for in this she was entirely circumvented by the political genius of Dunstan, the master-spirit of the age.

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[1] Although this infamous woman escaped the vengeance of human justice by fleeing to the continent, she was reduced to such abject destitution, that Asser declares she was seen begging her bread at Pavia, where she died.—Note to Malmesbury, by Dr. Giles

Emma of Normandy, the beautiful queen of Ethelred, and afterwards of Canute, plays a conspicuous part in the Saxon annals. There is a Latin treatise, written in her praise by a contemporary historian, entitled, "*Encomium Emmæ;*" but, notwithstanding the florid commendations there bestowed upon her, the character of this queen must be considered a doubtful one. The manner in which she sacrificed the interests of her children by her first husband, Ethelred, to those by her second unnatural marriage with the Danish conqueror, is little to her credit, and was certainly never forgiven by her son, Edward the Confessor; though that monarch, after he had witnessed the triumphant manner in which she cleared herself of the charges brought against her by her foes, by passing through the ordeal of walking barefoot, unscathed, over the nine red-hot ploughshares in Winchester cathedral, threw himself at her feet in a transport of filial penitence, implored her pardon with tears, and submitted to the discipline at the high altar, as a penance for having exposed her to such a test of her innocence.[1]

Editha, the consort of Edward the Confessor, was not only an amiable, but a learned lady. The Saxon historian, Ingulphus, himself a scholar at Westminster-monastery, close by Editha's palace, affirms that the queen used frequently to intercept him and his school-fellows in her walks, and ask them questions on their progress in Latin, or, in the words of his translator, "moot points of grammar with them, in which she oftentimes posed them." Sometimes she gave them a piece of silver or two out of her own purse, and sent them to the palace-buttery to breakfast. She was skilful in the works of the needle, and with her own hands she embroidered the garments of her royal husband, Edward the Confessor. But well as the acquirements and tastes of Editha qualified her to be the companion of that learned prince, he never treated her with the affection of a husband, or ceased to remember that her father had supported the Danish usurpation, and imbrued his hands in the blood of the royal line.

The last Anglo-Saxon queen, Edith, or Alfgith, surnamed the Fair, the faithful consort of the unfortunate Harold, was the sister of the earls Morcar and Edwin, so celebrated in the Saxon annals, and the widow of Griffin, prince of North Wales. The researches of sir Henry Ellis, and other antiquaries of the present day, lead to the conclusion that the touching instance of woman's tender and devoted love,—the verification of Harold's mangled body among the slain at Hastings, generally attributed to his paramour, belongs rather to queen Edith, his disconsolate widow.

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[1] Milner's Winchester.

Such is the brief summary of our early British and Anglo-Saxon queens. A far more important position on the progressive tableau of history is occupied by the royal ladies who form the series of our mediæval queens, commencing with Matilda of Flanders, the wife of William the Conqueror, the mother of a mighty line of kings, whose august representative, our liege lady queen Victoria, at present wears the crown of this realm. The spirit of chivalry, born in the poetic South, was not understood by the matter-of-fact Saxons, who regarded women as a very subordinate link of the social chain. The Normans, having attained to a higher grade of civilization, brought with them the refined notion, inculcated by the *troubadours* and minstrels of France and Italy, that the softer sex was entitled, not only to the protection and tenderness, but to the homage and service of all true knights. The revolution in popular opinion effected by this generous sentiment elevated the character of woman, and rendered the consort of an Anglo-Norman or Plantagenet king a personage of scarcely less importance than her lord.

"There is something," observes an eloquent contemporary, "very peculiar in the view which we obtain of history in tracing the lives of queens-consort. The great world is never entirely shut out: the chariot of state is always to be seen,—the sound of its wheels is ever in our ears. We observe that the thoughts, the feelings, the actions of her whose course we are tracing are at no time entirely disconnected with him by whose hand the reins are guided, and we not unfrequently detect the impulse of her finger by the direction in which it moves." Whether beloved or not, the influence on society of the wife and companion of the sovereign must always be considerable; and for the honour of womankind be it remembered, that it has, generally speaking, been exerted for worthy purposes. Our queens have been instruments, in the hands of God, for the advancement of civilization, and the exercise of moral and religious influence; many of them have been brought from foreign climes to plant the flowers and refinements of a more polished state of society in our own, and well have they, for the most part, performed their mission.

William the Conqueror brought the sword and the feudal tenure. He burned villages, and turned populous districts into his hunting-grounds. His consort, Matilda, introduced her Flemish artisans, to teach the useful and profitable manufactures of her native land to a starving population: she brought her architects, and set them to build the stately fanes, which gave employment to another class of her subjects, and encouraged the fine arts,—sculpture, painting, and needle-work. Above all, she bestowed especial regard and honours on the poets and choniclers of her era.

The consort of Henry I., Matilda of Scotland, familiarly designated by her subjects "Maude, the gode quene," not only excelled in personal works of piety and charity, and in refining the morals and manners of the licentious Norman court, but exerted her influence with her royal husband to obtain the precious boon of a charter for the people, which secured to them the privilege of being governed by the righteous laws of Edward the Confessor. Her graceful successor, Adelicia of Louvaine, was, like herself, a patroness of poetry and history, and did much to improve the spirit of the age by affording a bright example of purity of conduct.

Our third Matilda, the consort of Stephen, was the founder of churches and hospitals, and the friend of the poor. It is certain that her virtues, talents, and conjugal heroism did more to preserve the crown to her husband than the swords of the warlike barons who espoused his cause. Eleanora of Aquitaine, though defective in her moral conduct, was a useful queen in her statistic and commercial regulations.

Berengaria, the crusading queen, of whom so much h been said and so little known, before the publication of her biography in the first edition of this work, was only influential through her mild virtues, her learning, and her piety; but she never held her state in England, which, during the greater portion of her warlike husband's reign, was suffering from the evils of absenteeism.

Isabella of Angoulême, the consort of John, was one of the few queens who have left no honourable memorials, either on the page of history or the statistics of this country. Neither can any thing be said in praise of Eleanor of Provence, the consort of Henry III., whose selfishness, avarice, and reckless extravagance offended all ranks of the people, especially the citizens of London, and precipitated the realm into the horrors of civil war.

The moral beauty of the character of Eleanor of Castile, the consort of Edward I., her wisdom, prudence, and feminine virtues, did much to correct the evils which the follies of her predecessors had caused, and restored the queenly office to its proper estimation. Her amiable successor, Marguerite of France, has left no other records than those of compassion and kindliness of heart.

For the honour of female royalty be it noticed, that Isabella of France is the only instance of a queen of England acting in open and shameless violation of the duties of her high vocation, allying herself with traitors and foreign agitators against her king and husband, and staining her name with the combined crimes of treason, adultery, murder, and regicide. It would, indeed, be difficult to parallel, in the history of any other country, so many beautiful examples of conjugal devotedness as are to be found in the annals of the queens of England. Much of the statistic prosperity of England during the long, glorious reign of Edward III., may with justice be attributed to the admirable qualities and popular government of queen Philippa, who had the wisdom to establish, and the good taste to encourage, home manufactures, and never failed to exert her influence in a good cause.

Under the auspices and protection of the blameless Anne of Bohemia, the first queen of Richard II., we hail the first dawn of the principles of the Reformation. The seeds that were then sown under her gentle influence, though apparently crushed in the succeeding reigns, took deeper root than shallow observers suspected, and were destined to spring up in the sixteenth century, and to produce fruits that should extend to the ends of the earth, when, in the fulness of time, the gospel should be preached by English missionaries to nations, of whose existence neither Wickliffe nor his royal patroness, queen Anne of England, in the fourteenth century, were aware. Isabella of Valois, the virgin widow of Richard II., whose eventful history has been for the first time recorded in this work, had no scope for queenly influence in this country, being recalled at so tender an age to her own.

Rapin has been betrayed by his vindictive hatred of his own country to assert, that every king of England who married a French princess was unfortunate, and came to an untimely end; but how far this assertion is borne out by facts, let the triumphant career of Henry V., the husband of Katherine of Valois, daughter of Charles VI. of France, answer. The calamitous fate of Henry VI. resulted, not from his marriage with Margaret of Anjou, but was brought about by a concatenation of circumstances, which inevitably prepared the way for the miseries of his reign long before that unfortunate princess was born. The fatal deviation from the regular line of the regal succession in the elevation of Henry IV. to the throne, ensured a civil war as soon as the representative of the elder line should see a favourable opportunity for asserting his claims. The French wars, by exhausting the resources of the crown, compelled the ministers of Henry VI. to resort to excessive taxation, and the yet more unpopular expedient of debasing the silver coinage; and thus the affections of the people were alienated. The military talents of the duke of York, his wealth, and family alliance with the most powerful and popular nobleman in England,—the earl of Warwick, must necessarily have turned the scale against the impoverished sovereign, even if he had been better fitted by nature and education to maintain a contest. The energies of Henry's queen, in truth, supported his cause long after any other person would have regarded it as hopeless. Her courage and firmness delayed a catastrophe which nothing could avert.

It is a curious study to trace the effect of the political changes of those unquiet times on the consorts of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III. Three women more essentially opposite in their characteristics and conduct than the three contemporary, but not hostile, queens of the rival roses,—Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville, and Anne Neville, it would be difficult to find. The first, of royal birth and foreign education, schooled in adversity from her cradle, lion-like and indomitable under every vicissitude; the second, the daughter of one English knight and the widow of another, fair, insinuating, full of self-love and world-craft, inflated by sudden elevation, yet vacillating and submitting to become the tool of her enemies in her reverse of fortune; the third, the type of the timid dove, who is transferred without a struggle from the talons of the stricken eagle who had first seized her, to the grasp of the wily kite. How strangely were the destinies of these three unfortunate queens allied in calamity by the political changes of an era, which is thus briefly defined by the masterly pen of Guizot:—

"The history of England in the fifteenth century consists of two great epochs,—the French wars without, those of the roses within,—the wars abroad and the wars at home. Scarcely was the foreign war terminated when the civil war commenced; long and fatally was it continued while the houses of York and Lancaster contested the throne. When those sanguinary disputes were ended, the high English aristocracy found themselves ruined, decimated, and deprived of the power they had formerly exercised. The associated barons could no longer control the throne when it was ascended by the Tudors; and with Henry VII., in 1485, the era of centralization and the triumph of royalty commenced." The sovereign and the great body of the people from that time made common cause to prevent the re-establishment of an oligarchy, which had been found equally inimical to the rights of the commons and the dignity of the crown.

Having thus briefly traced the history and influence of the queens of England from the establishment of the feudal system to its close, commencing with the first Anglo-Norman queen, Matilda the wife of William the Conqueror, and concluding with Anne of Warwick, the last Plantagenet queen, herself the sad representative of the mightiest of all the aristocratic dictators of the fifteenth century—the earl of Warwick, surnamed 'the king-maker,' we proceed to consider those of the new epoch.

Elizabeth of York, the consort of Henry VII., is the connecting link between the royal houses of Plantagenet and Tudor. According to the legitimate order of succession she was the rightful sovereign of the realm, and though she condescended to accept the crown-matrimonial, she might have contested the regal garland. She chose the nobler distinction of giving peace to her bleeding country by tacitly investing her victorious champion with her rights, and blending the rival roses of York and Lancaster in her bridal-wreath. It was thus that Henry VII., unimpeded by conjugal rivalry, was enabled to work out his enlightened plans, by breaking down the barriers with which the pride and power of the aristocracy had closed the avenues to preferment against the unprivileged classes. The people, tired of the evils of an oligarchy, looked to the sovereign for protection, and the first stone in the altar of civil and religious liberty was planted on the ruins of feudality. The effects of the new system were so rapid, that in the succeeding reign we behold, to use the forcible language of a popular French writer, "two of Henry the Eighth's most powerful ministers of state, Wolsey and Cromwell, emanating, the one from the butcher's shambles, the other from the blacksmith's forge." Extremes, however, are dangerous, and the despotism which these and other of Henry's *parvenu* statesmen contrived to establish was, while it lasted, more cruel and oppressive than the tyranny and exclusiveness of the feudal magnates; but it had only an ephemeral existence. The art of printing had become general, and the spirit of freedom was progressing on the wings of knowledge through the land. The emancipation of England from the papal domination followed so immediately, that it appears futile to attribute that mighty change to any other cause. The stormy passions of Henry VIII., the charms and genius of Anne Boleyn, the virtues and eloquence of Katharine Parr, all had, to a certain degree, an effect in hastening the crisis; but the Reformation was cradled in the printing-press, and established by no other instrument.

In detailing the successive historic tragedies of the queens of Henry VIII., we enter upon perilous ground. The lapse of three centuries has done so little to calm the excited feelings caused by the theological disputes with which their names are blended, that it is scarcely possible to state facts impartially without displeasing those readers, whose opinions have been biassed by party writers on one side or the other. Henry VIII. was married six times, and divorced thrice: he beheaded two of his wives, and left two surviving widows,—Anne of Cleves and Katharine Parr. As long as the virtuous influence of his first consort, Katharine of Arragon, lasted, he was a good king, and, if not a good man, the evil passions which rendered the history of the latter years of his life one continuous chronology of crime, were kept within bounds. Four of his queens claimed no higher rank than the daughters of knights: of these, Anne Boleyn and Katharine Howard were cousins-german; both were married by Henry during the life of a previously wedded consort of royal birth, and were alike doomed by the remorseless tyrant to perish on a scaffold as soon as the ephemeral passion which led to their fatal elevation to a throne had subsided. We know of no tragedy so full of circumstances of painful interest as the lives of those unhappy ladies. It ought never to be forgotten, that it was to the wisdom and moral courage of his last queen, the learned and amiable Katharine Parr, that England is indebted for the preservation of her universities from the general plunder of ecclesiastical property.

The daughters of Henry VIII., Mary and Elizabeth, occupy more important places than any other ladies in this series of royal biographies. They were not only queens but sovereigns, girded with the sword of state and invested with the spurs of knighthood at their respective inaugurations, in token that

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they represented their male predecessors in the regal office, not merely as legislators, but, if necessary, as military leaders. Mary virtually abdicated her high office when she became, in evil hour both for herself and her subjects, the consort, and finally the miserable state-tool and victim, of the despotic bigot, Philip the Second of Spain.

Purely English in her descent, both on the father and mother's side for many generations, Elizabeth, notwithstanding the regal blood of the Plantagenets, which she derived from her royal grandmother, Elizabeth of York, was, literally speaking, a daughter of the people, acquainted intimately with the manners, customs, and even the prejudices of those over whom she reigned. This nationality, which never could be acquired by the foreign consorts of the Stuart kings, endeared her to her subjects as the last of a line of native sovereigns, while her great regnal talents rendered her reign prosperous at home and glorious abroad, and caused the sway of female monarchs to be regarded as auspicious for the time to come.

The life of every queen of England whose name has been involved with the conflicting parties and passions excited by revolutions or differences of religious opinions, has always been a task of extreme difficulty. More peculiarly so with regard to the consorts of Charles I., Charles II., and James II., since, for upwards of a century after the revolution of 1688, it was considered a test of loyalty to the reigning family and attachment to the church of England to revile the sovereigns of the house of Stuart, root and branch, and to consign them, their wives and children, their friends and servants, and every one who would not unite in desecrating their tombs, to the reprobation of all posterity. Every one who attempted to write history at that period was, to use the metaphor of the witty author of *Eōthen,* "subjected to the immutable law, which compels a man with a pen in his hand to be uttering now and then some sentiment not his own, as though, like a French peasant under the old *régime,* he were bound to perform a certain amount of work on the public highways." Happily the necessity, if it ever existed, of warping the web of truth to fit the exigencies of a political crisis, exists no longer. The title of the present illustrious occupant of the throne of Great Britain to the crown she wears is founded on the soundest principles, both of constitutional freedom of choice in the people, and legitimate descent from the ancient monarchs of the realm. The tombs of the last princes of the male line of the royal house of Stuart were erected at the expense of their august kinsman George IV. That generous prince set a noble example of liberal feeling in the sympathy which he was the first to accord to that unfortunate family. He did more; he checked the hackneyed system of basing modern history on the abuse of James II. and his consort, by authorizing the publication of a portion of the Stuart papers, and employing his librarian and historiographer to arrange the life of that prince from his journals and correspondence.

The consort of James II., Mary Beatrice of Modena, played an important rather than a conspicuous part in the historic drama of the stirring times in which her lot was cast. The tender age at which she was reluctantly torn from a convent to become the wife of a prince whose years nearly trebled her own, and the feminine tone of her mind, deterred her from interfering in affairs of state during the sixteen years of her residence in England. The ascetic habits and premature superannuation of her unfortunate consort compelled her, for the sake of her son, to emerge at length from the sanctuary of the domestic altar to enter upon the stormy arena of public life, when she became, and continued for many years after, the rallying point of the Jacobites. All the plots and secret correspondence of that party were carried on under her auspices. There are epochs in her life when she comes before us in her beauty, her misfortunes, her conjugal tenderness, and passionate maternity, like one of the distressed queens of Greek tragedy struggling against the decrees of adverse destiny. The slight mention of her that appears on the surface of English history has been penned by chroniclers of a different spirit from "Griffith,"—men whose hearts were either hardened by strong political and polemic animosities, or who, as a matter of business or expediency, did their utmost to defame her, because she was the wife of James II. and the mother of his unfortunate son. The bitterest of her unprovoked enemies, Burnet, was reduced to the paltry expedients of vituperation and calumny in the attacks he constantly makes on her. The first, like swearing, is only an imbecile abuse of words, and the last vanishes before the slightest examination. History is happily written on different principles in the present age. "We have now," says Guizot, "to control our assertions by the facts;" in plain English, to say nothing either in the way of praise or censure which cannot be substantiated by sound evidence.

It was the personal influence of Mary Beatrice with Louis XIV., the dauphin, and the duke of Burgundy, that led to the infraction of the peace of Ryswick by the courts of France and Spain, through their recognition of her son's claims to an empty title: to please her, Louis XIV. allowed the dependent on his bounty to be proclaimed at the gates of one of his own royal palaces as James III., king not only of Great Britain and Ireland, but even of France, and to quarter the fleur-de-lis unmolested. The situation of the royal widow and her son, when abandoned by their protector Louis XIV. at the peace of Utrecht, closely resembles that of Constance of Bretagne and her son Arthur after the recognition of the title of king John by their allies; but Mary Beatrice exhibits none of the fierce maternity attributed by Shakspeare to the mother of the rejected claimant of the English throne: her feelings were subdued by a long acquaintance with adversity and the fever of disappointed hope.

Our Dutch king, William III., is supposed to have intimated his contempt for the fair sex in general, and his jealousy of his illustrious consort's superior title in particular, when it was proposed to confer the sovereignty of Great Britain on her, by his coarse declaration that "he would not hold the crown by apron-strings." But the fact was, that Mary, though two degrees nearer in blood to the regal succession, had no more right to the crown than himself as the law then stood; and if the order of legitimacy were to be violated by setting aside the male heir, William saw no reason why it should be done in Mary's favour rather than his own. The conventional assembly adjusted this delicate point by deciding that the prince and princess of Orange should reign as joint sovereigns, to which William outwardly consented; yet the household-books furnish abundant proofs that, as far as he durst, he deprived his queen of the dignity which the will of the people had conferred upon her. The warrants were for a considerable time issued in his name singly, and dated in the first or second years of his, instead of their majesties' reign. It is also observable, that he never allowed her to participate with himself in the ceremonial of opening or proroguing parliament, on which occasions he occupied the throne *solus*, and arrogated exclusively to himself the regal office of sceptering or rejecting bills, which ought to have been submitted to her at the same time.

Mary, though naturally ambitious and fond of pageantry, endured these ungallant curtailments of her royal prerogatives and personal dignity with a submission, which her foreign spouse could never have ventured to exact from her if she had succeeded to the Britannic empire on the demise of the crown. In that case, William of Orange would have been indebted to her favour for the empty title of king, and such ceremonial honours and dignity as it might have pleased her to confer on him. Circumstances were, however, widely different. William's Dutch troops had rudely expelled Mary's royal father from his palace, forced him to vacate his regal office by driving him from the seat of government, and causing him to flee for refuge to a foreign land. William remaining thus undisputed master of the metropolis and exchequer, considered that Mary was indebted to him, not he to her, for a crown; and although the suffrages of the people invested her with the dignity of queen-regnant, she was, in all thinsg, as subservient to his authority as if she had been merely a queen-consort. The conjugal apron-strings were, nevertheless, William's strongest hold on the crown of England. Nothing but Mary's popular and able government at home could have enabled him to overcome the difficulties of his position during the revolt of Ireland and the insurrection in Scotland.

The mild sway of Anne, her tenderness of the lives of her subjects, her munificent charities to the poor, her royal bounties to that meritorious portion of the church, the indigent working clergy, caused her to be regarded, while living, with loyal affection by the great body of her subjects, and endeared her memory to succeeding generations. Anne is the last queen of Great Britain of whom a personal history can be written, till Time, the great mother of truth, shall raise the curtain of a recent but doubtful past, and by the publication of letters and domestic state-papers now inaccessible, enable those who may undertake the biographies of the queens of the reigning family to perform their task with fidelity.

Matilda of Flanders

MATILDA OF FLANDERS,

QUEEN OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

CHAPTER I.

Title of Queen—Regina—Matilda first so called—Her descent from Alfred—Parents—Education—Learning—Beauty—Character—Skill in embroidery—Sought in marriage by William of Normandy—His passionate love—Unsuccessful courtship—Brihtric Meaw, the English envoy—Matilda's love for him—Perseverance of William of Normandy—Furious conduct of William to Matilda—Their marriage—Rich apparel—William's early life—William and Matilda excommunicated—Dispensation—Matilda's taste for architecture—Matilda's sister married to Tostig—Birth of Matilda's eldest son—Harold's visit—Betrothed to Matilda's daughter—William's invasion of England—Letter to Matilda's brother—Matilda appointed regent of Normandy—Her son Robert—Happy arrival of Matilda in the Mora—Ship presented by her—William sails in it to England—Matilda's delineations—Battle of Hastings—News of victory brought to Matilda—Our Lady of Good Tidings.

MATILDA, the wife of William the Conqueror, was the first consort of a king of England who was called *regina*.[1] This was an innovation in the ancient customs of the land, for the Saxons simply styled the wife of the king 'the lady his companion,'[2] and to them it was displeasing to hear the Normans speak of Matilda as *la Royne,* as if she were a female sovereign, reigning in her own right;—so distinct in those days was the meaning attached in this country to the lofty title of *reine,* or *regina,* from that of queen, which, though at present the highest female title of honour used in England, then only signified companion. The people of the land murmured among themselves at this unprecedented assumption of dignity in the wife of their Norman sovereign; yet 'the strange woman,' as they called Matilda, could boast of royal Saxon blood. She was, in fact, the direct descendant of the best and noblest of their monarchs, Alfred, through the marriage of his daughter Elstrith with Baldwin II. of Flanders, whose son, Arnold the Great, was the immediate ancestor of Matilda,—an interesting circumstance, which history passes over in silence.[1] Few of the queens of England, indeed, can claim a more illustrious descent than this princess. Her father, Baldwin V., surnamed the Gentle, earl of Flanders, was the son of Baldwin IV. by Eleanora, daughter of duke Richard II. of Normandy; and her mother was Adelais, daughter of Robert king of France, and sister to Henry, the reigning sovereign of that country. She was nearly related to the emperor of Germany, and to most of the royal families in Europe. "If any one," says William of Poitou, "inquires who was Matilda's mother, he will learn that she was the daughter of Robert king of Gaul, the son and the nephew of kings from royal kings descended."

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[1] Asser, in his life of Alfred, whose contemporary and friend he was, and must therefore be regarded as a very important authority, expressly states the Anglo-Saxons did not "suffer the queen to sit near the king, nor to be called *regina*, but merely the king's wife:" that is, *quen*, or companion. It ought to be noted, that the Saxon historians writing in Latin, use, in both instances, the Latin word *regina*, to signify queen, being ashamed of introducing a barbarous word into the Latin text; but the meaning is evident.

[2] *Hlafdige se cwene* is the Saxon phrase. Hlafdige, or lady, means the 'giver of bread;' cwene, or quen, was anciently used as a term of equality, indiscri-

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minately applied to both sexes. In the old Norman chronicles and poems, instead of the duke of Normandy and his peers, the phrase used is the duke of Normandy and his quens. "The word 'quen,' signifying companion," says Rapin, vol. i. p. 148, "was common both to men and women." So late as the thirteenth century a collection of poems, written by Charles of Anjou and his courtiers, is quoted as the Songs of the Quens of Anjou. Also in a chant of the twelfth century, enumerating the war-cries of the French provinces, we find

And the *quens* of Thibaut
"Champagne and passavant!" cry.

[1] See Matilda's pedigree in Ducarel's Norman Antiquities. She was also descended from Judith, daughter of the emperor of the Franks, who after the death of Ethelwolf married the earl of Flanders. One of the annotators on William of Malmesbury asserts, that Judith, the widow of Ethelwolf, was the mother of Matilda the wife of the Conqueror; but if so, Matilda must have been 150 years old at the time of her marriage.

Matilda was born about the year 1031, and was very carefully educated. She was possessed of fine natural talents, and was no less celebrated for her learning than for her great beauty. William of Malmesbury, when speaking of this princess, says, "She was a singular mirror of prudence in our days, and the perfection of virtue." Among her other acquirements, Matilda was particularly famed for her skill in ornamental needlework, which, in that age, was considered one of the most important and desirable accomplishments which princesses and ladies of high rank could possess. We are told by a worthy chronicler,[1] "that the proficiency of the four sisters of king Athelstane in spinning, weaving, and embroidery, procured those royal spinsters the addresses of the greatest princes in Europe." The fame of this excellent stitchery is, however, all the memorial that remains of the industry of Matilda's Saxon cousins; but her own great work, the Bayeux tapestry, is still in existence, and is, beyond all competition, the most wonderful achievement, in the gentle craft of needlework, that ever was executed by fair and royal hands. But of this we shall have to speak more fully, in its proper place, as a pictorial chronicle of the conquest of England.

The earl of Flanders, Matilda's father, was a rich, powerful, and politic prince, equally skilled in the arts of war and of peace. It was to him that the town of Lille, which he rebuilt and greatly beautified, owed its subsequent greatness; and the home manufactures of his native country, through his judicious encouragement, became a source of wealth and prosperity to Flanders. His family connexion with the king of France, his *suzerain* and ally, and his intimate relationship to most of the royal houses in Europe, rendered his alliance very desirable to several of the reigning princes, his neighbours, who became suitors for the hand of his daughter. Matilda had, however, bestowed her first affections on a young Saxon nobleman named Brihtric, and surnamed, from the fairness of his complexion, 'Meaw,' or 'Snaw,' who had visited her father's court on a mission from Edward the Confessor.

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[1] Malmesbury, vol. i. book ii. p. 26.

Brihtric Meaw was the son of Algar, lord of the honour of Gloucester, and was possessed of so fair a heritage in that fruitful part of England, that he would not have been esteemed an unsuitable consort for the Flemish princess if their love had been reciprocal, but, for some reason, he was insensible to her regard.[1] The dark sequel of this tale, which will be related in its proper place, is one of those strange facts which occasionally tinge the page of history with the colours of romance.

Whilst Matilda was wasting her morning bloom of life in unrequited love for the youthful envoy, whose affection was probably already pledged to one of his fair countrywomen, the report of her charms and noble qualities attracted the attention of the most accomplished sovereign in Christendom. "Duke William of Normandy," says William of Jumièges, "having learned that Baldwin earl of Flanders had a daughter named Matilda, very beautiful in person and of a generous disposition, sent deputies, by the advice of his peers, to ask her of her father in marriage, who gladly consented, and gave her a large portion." Wace, also, tells us "that Matilda was very fair and graceful, and that her father gave her joyfully to duke William, with large store of wealth and very rich *appareilement*." Seven long years, however, of stormy debate intervened before the courtship of William of Normandy was brought to this happy conclusion. Contemporary chroniclers, indeed, afford us reason to suspect, that the subsequent conquest of England proved a less difficult achievement to the valiant duke than the wooing and winning of Matilda of Flanders. He had to contend against the opposition of the courts of France and Burgundy, the intrigues of his rival kinsmen of the race of Rollo, the objections of the church, and, worse than all, the reluctance and disdain of the lady. The chronicler Ingerius declares, "that William was so infuriated by the scorn with which Matilda treated him, that he waylaid her in the streets of Bruges, as she was returning with her ladies from mass, beat her, rolled her in the mud, spoiled her rich array, and then rode off at full speed." This Teutonic mode of courtship, according to the above authority, brought the matter to a favourable crisis; for Matilda, being convinced of the strength of William's passion by the violence of his behaviour, or afraid of encountering a second beating, consented to become his wife.[1]

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[1] Chronicle of Tewkesbury. Cotton. MSS. Cleopatra, c. 111, 220. Leland's Collectanea, vol. i. p. 78. Monasticon, 111, 59. Palgrave's Rise and Progress, vol. i. p. 294. Thierry's Anglo-Normans, vol. i. p. 335.

A different version of this strange episode in a royal wooin is given by Baudoin d'Avesnes, who shows that the provocation which duke William had received from his fair cousin was not merely a rejection of his matrimonial overtures, but an insulting allusion to the defect in his birth. According to this writer, the earl of Flanders received the Norman envoys who came to treat for a marriage between their duke and Matilda very courteously, and expressed great satisfaction at the proposed alliance; but when he spake of it to the damsel his daughter, she replied, with infinite disdain, that "she would not have a bastard for her husband."

The earl softened the coarse terms in which Matilda had signified her rejection of duke William, and excused her as well as he could to the Norman deputies. Her passion for Brihtric Meaw had, probably, more to do with her rude refusal of William, than the defect in his birth on which she grounded her objection. It was not long, however, before William was informed of what Matilda had really said. He was peculiarly sensitive on the painful subject of his illegitimacy, and no one had ever taunted him with it unpunished. Neither the high rank nor the soft sex of the fair offender availed to protect her from his vengeance. In a transport of fury he mounted his horse, and, attended by only a few of his people, rode privately to Lille, where the court of Flanders then was. He alighted at the palace gates, entered the hall of presence alone, passed boldly through it, strode unquestioned through the state apartments of the earl of Flanders, and burst into the countess's chamber, where he found the damsel her daughter, whom he seized by her long tresses, and as she, of course, struggled to escape from his ruffian grasp, dragged her by them about the chamber, struck her repeatedly, and flung her on the ground at his feet. After the perpetration of these outrages, he made his way back to the spot where his squire held his horse in readiness, sprang to the saddle, and setting spurs to the good steed, distanced all pursuit. Although the Norman, French, and Flemish chroniclers differ as to the place where William the Conqueror perpetrated this rude personal assault on his fair cousin, and relate the manner of it with some few variations, they all agree as to the fact that he felled her to the ground by the violence of his blows. This incident is quoted by one of the most learned of modern historians, Michelet, in his History of France, and authenticated by the author of L'Art de Vérifier les Dates, from a curious contemporary MS. Vatout also records the circumstance in his History of the Château d'Eu; and refers the antiquary for further particulars to an ancient M S. chronicle in the Ecclesiastical library at St. Germains-au-Près, Paris.

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[1] Chronicle of Inger, likewise called Ingerius. The anecdote has been translated by J. P. Andrews.

When earl Baldwin heard of the unprecedented affront that had been offered to his daughter, he was highly incensed, made a hostile attack on duke William's territories to avenge it, did a great deal of damage, and suffered not a little in return, for William was never slack at retaliation. After a long series of aggressive warfare in this unprofitable quarrel, they found it expedient to enter into pacific negotiation, by the advice of all their wise and prudent counsellors. A meeting took place between the belligerent parties for the ratification of the treaty, when, to the surprise of every one, duke William renewed his suit for Matilda's hand; and, to the still greater astonishment of all her friends, when the proposal was named to the said damsel, she replied, that "it pleased her well."[1] Her father, who had not anticipated so favourable an answer, was much delighted at forming a bond of strong family alliance with his formidable neighbour, lost no time in concluding the matrimonial treaty, and gave his daughter, as before said, a large portion in lands and money, with abundance of jewels and rich array.[2] The castle of Augi,—no other, gentle reader, than the château d'Eu, so much celebrated in our own times as the family residence of Louis Philippe of Orleans, late king of the French, and his queen,—was the place appointed for the solemnization of the marriage of Matilda of Flanders and William of Normandy. This castle was conveniently situated for the purpose, being at the extreme frontier of William's territories. He had recently taken it, after a fierce siege, from a party of his rebellious nobles, headed by Busac, the half-brother of Robert count of Eu; which Busac, being the grandson in the female line of Richard I., duke of Normandy, had set up a rival claim to the duchy in the year 1047. His claims had been supported by Henry king of France, and the disaffected portion of William's baronage. Robert count of Eu had not taken an active part in the rebellion, but had allowed his castle to be made the stronghold of Busac and his confederates.[1]

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[1] Baudoin d'Avesnes.

[2] Ibid. Vatout's History of Eu.

After the reduction of this fortress by the victorious duke in the year 1049, the count of Eu remained as a sort of state-prisoner in his own castle, which was garrisoned by duke William's soldiers. Such was the position of affairs at château d'Eu when the two courts of Normandy and Flanders met there, in the year 1052, for the celebration of the marriage between William and Matilda.[2] The duke arrived first, attended by his valiant *quens,* to await the advent of the haughty bride, whom he had wooed after so strange a fashion. Matilda came, accompanied by both her parents and a splendid train of nobles and ladies; and there, in the cathedral church of Nôtre Dame d'Eu, the spousal rites were solemnized, and the marriage blessed, in the presence of both courts.

In the midst of the rejoicings at the nuptial feast, the earl of Flanders, waxing merry, asked his daughter, laughingly, how it happened that she had so easily been brought to consent at last to a marriage, which she had so scornfully refused in the first instance. "Because," replied Matilda, pleasantly, "I did not know the duke so well then as I do now; for," continued she, "he must be a man of great courage and high daring who could venture to come and beat me in my own father's palace."[1] How the valiant duke ever ventured into her presence again, after such a manifestation of his bold spirit, we are at a loss to imagine; and that she should like him the better for his ruffianly behaviour appears more unaccountable still, affording at the same time a curious instance of the rude manners of the period and of the inconsistencies of the human heart.

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[1] Benoit's Chronicles of Normandy. Vatout's History of Eu.

[2] The chronicle of Paris places the date of Matilda's marriage in the year 1056; but all other writers of the period affirm that this event took place in the year 1050.

The lively answer of the young duchess was of course much applauded by her new lord and his vassal peers. The disgraced count of Eu, seeing his victorious suzerain in such high good humour, took the opportunity of the general rejoicings to sue for pardon; and that so successfully, that William restored his lands and castle, and, becoming thoroughly reconciled to him, from that day took him into favour, of which he never had the slightest cause to repent; for, bound to him by gratitude, Robert of Eu became thenceforth one of his most attached adherents, and greatly assisted by his valour and good counsel in the conquest of England.[2] The presence of so many illustrious personages, the splendour of the nuptial fêtes, and the quantity of money which the influx of the numerous strangers who flocked to Eu to witness this remarkable marriage caused to be circulated in that town, made the inhabitants forget their late sufferings during the siege.

The royal mantle, garnished with jewels, in which Matilda was arrayed on the day of her espousals, and also that worn by her mighty lord on the same occasion, together with his helmet, were long preserved in the treasury of the cathedral of Bayeux. Lancelot mentions an inventory of precious effects belonging to the church, dated 1476, in which these costly bridal garments are enumerated.

From Eu, William conducted his newly wedded duchess to Rouen, where she made her public entry as his bride, still accompanied by her parents, who were invited by William to participate in the rejoicings and festivities with which his marriage was commemorated in the capital of his dominions. The earl and countess of Flanders remained with the duke

[1] Baudoin d'Avesnes.

[2] Vatout's History of Château d'Eu.

and duchess several days, to witness the pageantry and all the popular indications of satisfaction with which Matilda was received.[1] When all the tourneys and fêtes were ended, the earl and countess of Flanders took leave of their daughter, and returned to their own country. William consoled Matilda for the loss of their society by taking her on a royal progress through Normandy, to show her the principal towns, and to make her acquainted with the manners and customs of the mighty people over whose court she was to preside. He was, of course, proud of displaying a consort of such surpassing beauty and majestic grace to his subjects. Everywhere she came she was received with demonstrations of delight and admiration. It was more than half a century since there had been a duchess of Normandy; and as bachelor sovereigns seldom conduce to the domestic happiness or prosperity of a nation, all ranks of people were prepared to welcome Matilda with joy, and to anticipate great political and social advantages from the auspicious alliance their duke had formed.

Nothing could be more perilous than the position of William's affairs at the period of his marriage with Matilda of Flanders. He was menaced on every side by powerful neighbours, who were eager to appropriate and parcel out the fertile fields of Normandy, to the enlargement of their respective borders; and at the same time a formidable party was arraying itself against him within his own dominions in favour of Guy of Burgundy, the eldest son of his aunt Alice. This prince was the nearest legitimate male descendant of duke Richard the Second of Normandy; and as the direct line had failed with duke Robert, the late sovereign, he was, notwithstanding the operation of the Salic law, considered by many to possess a better right to the dukedom than the son of duke Richard by Arlotta, the skinner's daughter of Falaise. The particulars of William's birth are too well known to require recapitulation; but it is proper to notice that there are historians who maintain that Arlotta was the wife of duke Robert, though not of rank or breeding fit to be acknowledged as his duchess.[1] This we are disposed to regard as a mere paradox, since William, who would have been only too happy to avail himself of the plea of even a contract or promise of marriage between his parents, in order to strengthen his defective title by a pretence of legitimacy, never made any such assertion. On the contrary, not only before his victorious sword had purchased for him a more honourable surname, but even afterwards, he submitted to the use of the one derived from his mother's shame; and in the charter of the lands which he bestowed on his son-in-law, Alan duke of Bretagne, in Yorkshire, he subscribed himself "William, surnamed Bastardus."[2] It is a general opinion that Arlotta was married to Herlewin of Conteville during the lifetime of duke Robert, and that this circumstance prevented any possibility of William attempting to assert that he was the legitimate offspring of his royal sire.[3]

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[1] William of Jumièges. Chronicle of Normandy.

William was, from the very moment of his birth, regarded as a child of the most singular promise. The manful grasp with which his baby hand detained the rushes of which he had '*taken seizin*'[4] the moment after his entrance into life, when, in consequence of the danger of his mother, he was permitted to lie unheeded on the floor of his chamber where he first saw the light,[5] gave occasion to the oracular gossips in attendance on Arlotta to predict "that the child would become a mighty man, ready to acquire every thing within his reach; and that which he acquired, he would with a strong hand steadfastly maintain against all challengers."—"When William was a year old, he was introduced into the presence of his father, duke Robert, who seeing what a goodly and fair child he was, and how closely he resembled the royal line of Normandy, embraced him, acknowledged him to be his son, and caused him to receive princely nurture in his own palace. When William was five years old, a battalion of boys, of his own age, was placed under his command, with whom he practised the military exercise according to the custom of those days. Over these infant followers William assumed the authority of a sovereign in miniature; and if dissensions arose among them, they always referred to his decision, and his judgments are said to have been remarkable for their acuteness and equity."[1] Thus early in life did the mighty Norman learn to enact the character of a leader and legislator. Nature had, indeed, eminently fitted him for the lofty station which he was afterwards destined to fill; and his powerful talents were strengthened and improved by an education such as few princes in that rude, unlettered age were so fortunate as to receive. At the age of eight years he was able to read and explain Cæsar's Commentaries.[2]

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[1] William of Malmesbury. Ingulphus.

[2] Leland.

[3] After the accession of Henry II. to the throne, a Saxon pedigree was ingeniously invented for Arlotta, which is too great a curiosity to be omitted. "Edmund Ironside," says the Saxon genealogist, "had two sons, Edwin and Edward, and an only daughter, whose name does not appear in history because of her bad conduct, seeing that she formed a most imprudent alliance with the king's skinner. The king, in his anger, banished the skinner from England, together with his daughter. They both went to Normandy, where they lived on public charity, and had successively three daughters. Having one day come to Falaise to beg at duke Richard's door, the duke, struck with the beauty of the woman and her children, asked who she was? 'I am an Englishwoman,' she said, 'and of the royal blood.' The duke, on this answer, treated her with honour, took the skinner into his service, and had one of his daughters brought up in the palace. She was Arlotte, or *Charlotte*, the mother of the Conqueror."—Thierry.

[4] The feudal term for taking possession.

[5] William of Malmesbury.

The beauty and early promise of this boy caused him to be regarded with peculiar interest by the Normans; but as a child of illegitimate birth, William possessed no legal claim to the succession. His title was simply founded on the appointment of the duke, his father. That prince, having no other issue, before he set out on his mysterious pilgrimage for the Holy Land, called the peers of Normandy together, in the hôtel de Ville, and required them to swear fealty to the young William as his successor. When the princely boy, then a child of seven years old, was brought in to receive the homage of the assembled nobles, duke Robert took him in his arms, and, after kissing and passionately embracing him, he presented him to his valiant '*quens*,' as their future sovereign, with this remark, "He is little, but he will grow."[3] The peers of Normandy having consented to recognise William,[1] the duke appointed his vassal kinsman and friend, Alan duke of Bretagne, seneschal of his dominions in his absence. Then he carried his son to Paris, and delivered him into the hands of the king of France, his *suzerain*, or paramount lord; and having received his promise of protecting and cherishing the boy with a loving care, he made William perform the same homage to that monarch as if he were already the reigning duke of Normandy, by which he secured his sovereign's recognition of his son's title to the ducal crown. After these arrangements, duke Robert departed on that expedition, from which he never again returned to his own dominions.[2]

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[1] Henderson's Life of the Conqueror.

[2] According to William of Malmesbury, the importance which the Conqueror placed on mental culture was great. Throughout life he was used to say, "that an illiterate king was a crowned ass."

[3] "Il est petit, mais il croitera."—Wace.

At the court of his sovereign, Henry I. of France, the uncle of his future spouse, Matilda of Flanders, William completed his education, and learned the science of diplomacy, secure from all the factions and intrigues with which Normandy was convulsed. The states, true to the fealty they had sworn to the son of their deceased lord, sent ambassadors to Paris to claim their young duke.[3] The king of France resigned him to the deputies, but soon after invaded his dominions. Raoul de Gace and Roger de Beaumont stoutly maintained the cause of their young duke, both in the court and in the camp They were his tutors in the art of war, and through their assistance and advice he was enabled to maintain the dignity of a sovereign and military chief, at a period of life when princes are generally occupied in childish amusements or the pleasures of the chase.[1]

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[1] Chronicle of Normandy. Malmesbury.

[2] It was whispered by some, that duke Robert undertook his pilgrimage to Jerusalem as an expiatory penance for the death of his elder brother and sovereign, duke Richard III., which he was suspected of having hastened; while others believed he was impelled from motives of piety alone to pay his vows at the holy grave, according to a new but prevailing spirit of misdirected devotion, which manifested itself among the princes and nobles of that age of superstition and romance. Whether duke Robert ever reached the place of his destination is uncertain. The last authentic tidings respecting him that reached his capital were brought by Pirou, a returned pilgrim from the Holy Land, who reported that he met his lord, the duke of Normandy, on his way to the holy city, borne in a litter on the shoulders of four stout Saracens, being then too ill to proceed on his journey on foot. When the royal pilgrim recognised his vassal, he exclaimed, with great animation, "Tell my valiant peers that you have seen your sovereign carried towards heaven on the backs of fiends."—William of Malmesbury. Whether this uncourteous allusion to the spiritual darkness of his pagan bearers was sufficiently intelligible to them to have the effect of provoking them into shortening his journey thither, we know not. Some chronicles, indeed, assert that he died at Nicea, in Bithynia, on his return; but there is a strange uncertainty connected with his fate, and it appears that the Norman nobles long expected his return,—an expectation that was probably most favourable to the cause of his youthful successor, whose title might otherwise have been more effectually disputed by the heirs of the sisters and aunts of duke Robert.

[3] Chronicle of Normandy.

One by one, almost every Norman noble who could boast any portion of the blood of Rollo, the founder of the ducal line of Normandy, was incited by king Henry of France to stir up an insurrection as a rival claimant of the crown. On one occasion, William would in all probability have fallen a victim to the plot which his cousin Guy of Burgundy had laid to surprise him, when he was on a hunting excursion, and was to pass the night without any of his military retinue at the castle of Valognes; but from this peril he was preserved by the fidelity of his fool, who, happening to overhear the conspirators arranging their plan, travelled all night at full speed to give the duke notice of his danger; and finding means to make an entrance into the castle at four o'clock in the morning, he struck violently with the handle of his whip at the chamber-door of his sleeping sovereign, and shouted, "Levez, levez, seigneur!" till he succeeded in rousing him. So close at hand, however, were Guy of Burgundy and his confederates, that it was only by mounting his swiftest steed, half-dressed, and riding with fiery speed for many hours, that William could effect his escape from his pursuers; and even then he must have fallen into their hands, if he had not encountered a gentleman on the road with whom he changed horses, his own being thoroughly spent. Guy of Burgundy was afterwards taken prisoner by the young duke; but having been on affectionate terms with him in his childhood, he generously forgave him all the trouble he had occasioned him, and his many attempts against his life.[2]

The king of France was preparing to invade Normandy again, but William's fortunate marriage with Matilda, who was a legitimate descendant of the royal line, strengthened his defective title to the throne of Normandy, and gained for him a powerful ally in the person of his father-in-law, the earl of Flanders. The death of Henry averted the storm that still loured over Normandy; and the young Philip of France, his son and successor, having been left during his minority under the guardianship of his aunt's husband, Baldwin of Flanders, Matilda's father, William found himself entirely relieved from all present fears of hostility on the part of France.[1] Scarcely, however, was he preparing himself to enjoy the happiness of wedded life, when a fresh cause of annoyance arose.

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[1] Chronicle of Normandy. Malmesbury. Wace.

[2] Ibid. Mezerai. Wace

Mauger, the archbishop of Rouen, an illegitimate uncle of the young duke, who had taken great pains to prevent his marriage with Matilda of Flanders, finding all the obstacles which he had raised against it were unavailing, proceeded to pronounce sentence of excommunication against the newly wedded pair, under the plea of its being a marriage within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity.[2] William indignantly appealed to the pope against this sentence, who, on the parties submitting to the usual fines, nullified the archbishop's ecclesiastical censures, and granted the dispensation for the marriage, on condition of the young duke and duchess each building and endowing an abbey at Caen, and an hospital for the blind. Lanfranc, afterwards the celebrated archbishop of Canterbury, but at that time an obscure individual, to whom William had extended his protection and patronage, was entrusted with this negotiation, which he conducted with such ability as to secure to himself the favour and confidence both of William and Matilda, by whom he was, in after years, advanced to the office of tutor to their royal offspring, and finally to the highest ecclesiastical rank and power.

William and Matilda submitted to the conditions on which the dispensation for their marriage had been granted, by founding the sister abbeys of St. Stephen and the Holy Trinity. That of St. Stephen was built and endowed by William for a fraternity of monks, of which he made Lanfranc abbot. Matilda founded and endowed that of the

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[1] St. Marthe. Wace.

[2] Chronicle of Normandy. Matilda was the grand-daughter of Eleanor of Normandy, William's aunt.

Holy Trinity, for nuns. It should appear that the ground on which these holy edifices were erected was not very honestly obtained, as we shall have occasion to show hereafter.[1] William, highly exasperated at the archbishop's attempt to separate him from his bride, retaliated upon him by calling a convocation of all the bishops of Normandy, at Lisieux, before whom he caused Mauger to be accused of several crimes and misdemeanors, especially of selling consecrated chalices, and other articles of church-plate, to supply his luxury.[2] Mauger, being convicted of these mal-practices, was deposed from his office. The disgrace of the archbishop has been attributed to the resentment Matilda conceived against him on account of his impertinent attempt to invalidate her marriage; and that William, being roused by her complaints, sought out an occasion to degrade him from his see.

Tranquillity being established, William proceeded to build a royal palace within the precincts of St. Stephen's abbey, for his own residence and that of his young duchess. The great hall, or council-chamber, of this palace was one of the most magnificent apartments at that time in Europe.

Matilda, inheriting from her father, Baldwin of Lille, a taste for architecture, took great delight in the progress of these stately buildings; and her foundations are among the most splendid relics of Norman grandeur. She was a munificent patroness of the arts, and afforded great encouragement to men of learning, co-operating with her husband most actively in all his paternal plans for the advancement of trade, the extension of commerce, and the general happiness of the people committed to their charge. In this they were most successful. Normandy, so long torn with contending factions, and impoverished with foreign warfare, began to taste the blessings of repose; and, under the wise government of her energetic sovereign, soon experienced the good effects of his enlightened policy. At his own expense, William built the first pier that ever was constructed, at Cherbourg.[3] He superintended the building and organization of fleets, traced out commodious harbours for his ships, and in a comparatively short time rendered Normandy a very considerable maritime power, and finally the mistress of the Channel.

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[1] Montfaucon. Malmesbury. [2] William of Malmesbury.
[3] Henderson's Life of William the Conqueror.

The domestic happiness which William enjoyed with his beautiful duchess appears to have been very great. All historians have agreed that they were a most attached pair, and that, whatever might have been the previous state of Matilda's affections, they were unalterably and faithfully fixed upon him from the hour she became his wife; and with reason, for William was the most devoted of husbands, and always allowed her to take the ascendant in the matrimonial scale. The confidence he reposed in her was unbounded, and very shortly after their marriage he intrusted the reins of government to her care, when he crossed over to England to pay a visit to his friend and kinsman, Edward the Confessor. By his marriage with Matilda, William had added a nearer tie of relationship to the English sovereign; and he was, perhaps, willing to remind the childless monarch of that circumstance, and to recall to his memory the hospitality he had received, both at the Flemish and the Norman courts, during the period of his adversity.[1] Edward "received him very honourably, and presented him with hawks and hounds, and many other fair and goodly gifts," says Wace, "as tokens of his love." Duke William paid this visit during the exile of Godwin and his sons; it is probable that he availed himself of their absence to obtain from Edward the promise of being adopted as his successor to the English throne, and also to commence a series of political intrigues connected with that mighty project, which, fourteen years afterwards, he carried into effect.

In pursuing the broad stream of history, how few writers take the trouble of tracing the under-currents by which the tide of events is influenced! The marriage of Tostig, the son of Godwin, with Judith of Flanders, the sister of Matilda, wife of William of Normandy, was one great cause of the treacherous and unnatural conduct, on his part, which decided the fate of Harold, and transferred the crown of England to the Norman line. During the period of their exile from England, Godwin and his family sought refuge at the court of the earl of Flanders, Tostig's father-in-law, from whom they received friendly and hospitable entertainment, and were treated by the duke and duchess of Normandy with all the marks of friendship that might reasonably be expected, in consideration of the family connexion to which we have alluded.[1]

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[1] Higden, Polychronicon.

Nine months after her marriage, Matilda gave birth to a son, whom William named Robert, after his father, thinking that the name of a prince whose memory was dear to Normandy, would ensure the popularity of his heir.[2] The happiness of the royal pair was greatly increased by this event. They were at that period reckoned the handsomest and most tenderly united couple in Europe. The fine natural talents of both had been improved by a degree of mental cultivation very unusual in that age; there was a similarity in their tastes and pursuits which rendered their companionship delightful to each other in private hours, and gave to all their public acts that graceful unanimity which could not fail of producing the happiest effects on the minds of their subjects. The birth of Robert was followed in quick succession by that of Richard, William-Rufus, Cecilia, Agatha, Constance, Adela, Adelaide, and Gundred. During several years of peace and national prosperity, Matilda and her husband employed themselves in superintending the education of their lovely and numerous family, several of whom, according to the report of contemporary chronicles, were children of great promise.[3]

No very remarkable event occurs in the records of Matilda's court, till the arrival of Harold in the year 1065. Harold, having undertaken a voyage to Normandy in an open fishing-boat, was driven by stress of weather into the river Maye, in the territories of the earl of Ponthieu, by whom, with the intention of extorting a large ransom, he was seized, and immured in the dungeons of Beaurain. The duke of Normandy, however, demanded the illustrious captive, and the earl of Ponthieu, understanding that Harold's brother was husband to the duchess of Normandy's sister, thought it most prudent to resign his prey to the family connexion by whom it was claimed. Harold was treated with apparent friendship by William and Matilda. They even offered to bestow one of their daughters upon him in marriage,—a young lady whose age did not exceed seven years; and to her Harold permitted himself to be affianced, though without any intention of keeping his plight.

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[1] Wace. Ingulphus. Eadmer.

[2] Malmesbury. Wace.

[3] Malmesbury. Ordericus Vitalis.

William then confided to his reluctant guest the tale of his own adoption by Edward the Confessor, for his successor, and proceeded to extort from him a solemn oath to render him all the assistance in his power, in furtherance of his designs on the crown of England.[1] Harold, on his return to England, came to an open rupture with his brother Tostig. Probably he had, during his late visit to Normandy, discovered how entirely the latter was in the interest of his Flemish wife's connexions. Tostig then fled, with his wife and children, to the court of his father-in-law, the earl of Flanders, and devoted himself entirely to the cause of William of Normandy.

At this perilous crisis, when so dark a storm was slowly but surely gathering over England, a woful deterioration had taken place in the national character of the people, especially among the higher classes, who had given way to every species of luxury and licentious folly. William of Malmesbury draws the following quaint picture of their manners and proceedings at this period. "Englishmen," says he, "had then transformed themselves into the strange manners of the French, not only in their speech and behaviour, but in their deeds and characters. Their fashion in dress was to go fantastically appointed, with garments shortened to the knee. Their heads shorn, and their beards shaven all but the upper lip, on which they wore long moustaches. Their arms they loaded with massive bracelets of gold, carrying withal pictured marks upon their skins, pounced in with divers colours;" by which it is evident that the Anglo-Saxons had adopted the barbarous practice of tattooing their persons, like the rude aborigines of the island eleven centuries previous. "They were," continues our author, "accustomed to eat to repletion, and to drink to excess; while the clergy wholly addicted themselves to light and trivial literature, and could scarcely read their own breviaries." In a word, they had, according to the witness of their own chronicles, arrived at that pass of sensuality and folly, which is generally supposed to provoke a national visitation in the shape of pestilence or the sword.

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[1] Wace. Malmesbury. Thierry.

"The Normans of that period," says Malmesbury, "were proudly apparelled, delicate in their food, but not gluttonous; a race inured to war, which they could scarcely live without; fierce in rushing upon the foe, and, when unequal in force, ready to use stratagem or bribery to gain their ends. They live in large houses with economy; they wish to rival their superiors; they envy their equals, and plunder their inferiors, but not unfrequently intermarry with their vassals." Such were the general characteristics of the men whom William had rendered veterans in the art of war, and, both by precept and example, stimulated to habits of frugality, temperance, and self-control. A mighty sovereign and a mighty people, possessing within themselves the elements of every requisite that might ensure the success of an undertaking, which, by every other nation in Europe, must have been considered as little short of madness.

When the intelligence of king Edward's death, coupled with the news of Harold's assumption of the regal dignity, reached the court of Normandy, William was struck speechless with indignation and surprise, and is said to have unconsciously tied and untied the rich cordon that fastened his cloak several times, in the first tumults of his agitation and anger.[1] He then gave vent to his wrath, in fierce animadversions on Harold's broken faith in causing himself to be crowned king of England, in defiance of the solemn oath he had sworn to him to support his claims. William also complained of the affront that had been offered to his daughter by the faithless Saxon, who, regardless of his contract to the little Norman princess, just before king Edward's death strengthened his interest with the English nobles by marrying Edith or Algitha, sister to the powerful earls Morcar and Edwin, and widow to Griffith, prince of Wales. This circumstance is mentioned with great bitterness in all William's proclamations and reproachful messages to Harold, and appears to have been considered by him to the full as great a villany as the assumption of the crown of England.

When William first made known to his Norman peers his positive intention of asserting, by force of arms, his claims to the crown of England, on the plea of Edward the Confessor's verbal adoption of himself as successor to that realm, there were stormy debates among them on the subject. They were then assembled in the hall of Lillebon, where they remained long in council, but chiefly employed in complaining to one another of the warlike temper of their lord. There were, however, great differences of opinion among them, and they separated themselves into several distinct groups, because many chose to speak at once, and no one could obtain the attention of the whole assembly, but harangued as many hearers as could be prevailed on to listen to him. The majority were opposed to the idea of the expedition to England; they said, "they had already been grievously taxed to support the duke's foreign wars," and that "they were not only poor, but in debt;" while others were no less vehement in advocating their sovereign's project, and spake "of the propriety of contributing ships and men, and crossing the sea with him." Some said "they would," others, "that they would not;" and at last the contention among them became so fierce, that Fitz-Osborn, of Breteuil, surnamed the Proud Spirit, stood forth and harangued the malcontent portion of the assembly in these words:—"Why should you go on wrangling with your natural lord, who seeks to gain honour? You owe him service for your fiefs, and you ought to render it with all readiness. Instead of waiting for him to entreat you, you ought to hasten to him and offer your assistance, that he may not hereafter complain that his design has failed through your delays."—"Sir," replied they, "we fear the sea, and we are not bound to serve beyond it. But do you speak to the duke for us, for we do not seem to know our own minds, and we think you will decide better for us than we can do for ourselves."[1]

Fitz-Osborn, thus empowered to act as their deputy, went to the duke at their head, and in their names made him the most unconditional proffers of their assistance and co-operation. "Behold," said Fitz-Osborn, "the loving loyalty of your lieges, my lord, and their zeal for your service. They will pass with you over sea, and double their accustomed service. He who is bound to furnish twenty knights, will bring forty; he who should serve you with thirty, will now serve you with sixty; and he who owes one hundred, will cheerfully pay two hundred.[2] For myself, I will, in good love to my sovereign in his need, contribute sixty well-appointed ships charged with fighting men." Here the dissentient barons interrupted him with a clamour of disapprobation, exclaiming, "That he might give as much as he pleased himself, but they had never empowered him to promise such unheard-of aids for them;"[3] and they would submit to no such exactions from their sovereign, since if they once performed double service, it would henceforth be demanded of them as a right.

"In short," continues the lively chronicler, "they raised such an uproar, that no one could hear another speak,—no one could either listen to reason, or render it for himself. Then the duke, being greatly perplexed with the noise, withdrew, and sending for the barons one by one, exerted all his powers of persuasion to induce them to accede to his wishes, promising 'to reward them richly with Saxon spoils for the assistance he now required at their hands; and if they felt disposed to make good Fitz-Osborn's offer of double service at that time, he should receive it as a proof of their loyal affection, and never think of demanding it as a right on any future occasion.'" The nobles, on this conciliatory address, were pacified; and feeling that it was a much easier thing to maintain their opposition to their sovereign's wishes in the council than in the presence-chamber, began to assume a different tone, and even expressed their willingness to oblige him as far as it lay in their power.

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[1] Wace.

[2] Wace's Chronicle of Normandy.

[3] Ibid.

William next invited his neighbours, the Bretons, the Angevins, and men of Boulogne, to join his banners, bribing them with promises of good pay, and a share in the spoils of *merrie* England. He even proposed to take the king of France into the alliance, offering, if he would assist him with the quota of money, men, and ships which he required, to own him for the *suzerain* or paramount lord of England, as well as Normandy, and to render him a liegeman's homage for that island as well as for his continental dominions. Philip treated the idea of William's annexing England to Normandy as an extravagant chimera,[1] and asked him, "Who would take care of his duchy while he was running after a kingdom?" To this sarcastic query, William replied, "That is a care that shall not need to trouble our neighbours; by the grace of God we are blessed with a prudent wife and loving subjects, who will keep our border securely during our absence."[2]

William entreated the young count Baldwin of Flanders, the brother of his duchess, to accompany him as a friendly ally; but the wily Fleming, with whom the family connexion seems to have had but little weight, replied by asking William "What share of England he intended to bestow on him by way of recompence?"[3] The duke, surprised at this demand, told his brother-in-law, "That he could not satisfy him on that point till he had consulted with his barons on the subject;" but instead of naming the matter to them, he took a piece of fair parchment, and having folded it in the form of a letter, he superscribed it to count Baldwin of Flanders, sealed it with the ducal seal, and wrote the following distich on the label that surrounded the scroll:—

"Beau frère, en Angleterre vous aurez
Ce qui dedans escript vous trouverez;"[4]

which is to say, "Brother-in-law, I give you such a share of England as you shall find within this letter."

He sent the letter to the young count by a shrewd-witted page, who was much in his confidence. When Baldwin had read this promising endorsement, he broke the seal, full of expectation; but finding the parchment blank, he showed it to the bearer, and asked what was the duke's meaning? "Nought is written here," replied the messenger, "and nought shalt thou receive; therefore look for nothing. The honour that the duke seeks will be for the advantage of your sister and her children, and their greatness will be the advancement of yourself, and the benefit will be felt by your country; but if you refuse your aid, then, with the blessing of God, my lord will conquer England without your help."[1]

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[1] Wace's Chronicle of Normandy. [2] Ibid. [3] Wace. [4] Henderson. Wace.

But though William ventured, by means of this sarcastic device, to reprove the selfish feelings manifested by his brother-in-law, he was fain to subscribe to the only terms on which the aid of Matilda's father could be obtained; which was, by securing to him and his successors a perpetual pension of 300 marks of silver annually, in the event of his succeeding in establishing himself as king of England.[2] According to the Flemish historians, this pension was actually paid during the life of Baldwin V. and his son Baldwin VI., but afterwards discontinued. It is certain that Matilda's family connexions rendered the most important assistance to William in the conquest of England, and her countrymen were among his bravest auxiliaries.[3] The earl of Flanders was, in fact, the first person to commence hostilities against Harold, by furnishing the traitor Tostig with ships and a military force to make a descent on England. Tostig executed his mission more like a pirate-brigand than an accredited leader. The brave earls Morcar and Edwin drove him into Scotland, whence he passed into Norway, where he succeeded in persuading king Harfager to invade England at one point, simultaneously with William of Normandy's attack in another quarter of the island.[4]

The minds of the people of England in general were, at this momentous crisis, labouring under a superstitious depression, occasioned by the appearance of the splendid three-tailed comet, which became visible in their horizon at the commencement of the memorable year 1066, a few days before the death of king Edward. The astrologers who foretold the approach of this comet had thought proper to announce that it was ominous of a great national calamity in an oracular Latin distich, of which the following rude couplet is a literal translation:—

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[1] Wace.

[2] Wil. Gemetecensis, p. 665, and Daniel's Histoire de France, vol. iii. p. 90. Baldwin earl of Flanders furnished Tostig with sixty ships.—Malmesbury.—Saxon Annals.

[3] Tradition makes the famous Robin Hood a descendant of Matilda's nephew, Gilbert de Gant, who attended the Conqueror to England.—Hist. of Sleaford by Dr. Yerborough.

[4] Brompton. Saxon Annals.

"In the year one thousand and sixty-six,
Comets to England's sons an end shall fix."[1]

"About this time," says Malmesbury, "a comet or star, denoting, as they say, a change in kingdoms, appeared trailing its extended and fiery train along the sky; wherefore a certain monk of our monastery named Elmer, bowing down with terror when the bright star first became visible to his eye, prophetically exclaimed, 'Thou art come! a matter of great lamentation to many a mother art thou come! I have seen thee long before; but now I behold thee in thy terrors, threatening destruction to this country.'" Wace, whom we may almost regard in the light of a contemporary chronicler, in still quainter language describes the appearance of this comet, and the impression it made on the unphilosophical star-gazers of the eleventh century. "This year a great star appeared in the heavens, shining for fourteen days, with three long rays streaming towards the south. Such a star as is wont to be seen when a kingdom is about to change its ruler. I have seen men who saw it,—men who were of full age at the time of its appearance, and who lived many years afterwards."

The descriptions which I have just quoted from the pen of the Norman poet and the monastic chronicler, fall far short of the marvellousness of Matilda's delineation of this comet in the Bayeux tapestry, where the royal needle has represented it of dimensions that might well have justified the alarm of the terror-stricken group of Saxon princes, priests, and ladies, who appear to be rushing out of their pigmy dwellings, and pointing to it with unequivocal signs of horror; for, independently of the fact that it looks near enough to singe all their noses, it would inevitably have whisked the world and all its sister planets out of their orbits, if it had been of a hundredth part proportionable to the magnitude there portrayed.[1] Some allowance, however, ought to be made for the exaggeration of feminine reminiscences of an object, which we can scarcely suppose to have been transferred to the embroidered chronicle of the conquest of England till after the triumphant termination of William of Normandy's enterprise afforded his queen-duchess so magnificent a subject for the employment of the skill and ingenuity of herself and the ladies of her court, in recording his achievements on canvas by dint of needlework. But, on the eve of this adventurous expedition, we may naturally conclude that Matilda's time and thoughts were more importantly occupied than in the labours of the loom, or the fabrication of worsted pictures; when, in addition to all her fears and anxieties in parting with her lord, we doubt not but she had, at least, as much trouble in reconciling the Norman ladies to the absence of their husbands and lovers,[2] as the duke had to prevail on these his valiant *quens* to accompany him on an expedition so full of peril to all parties concerned in it.

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[1] Henderson

Previously to his departure to join his ships and forces assembled at the port of St. Vallery, William solemnly invested Matilda with the regency of Normandy, and entreated, "that he and his companions in arms might have the benefit of her prayers, and the prayers of her ladies, for the success of their expedition." He appointed for her council some of the wisest and most experienced men among the prelates and elder nobles of Normandy.[3] The most celebrated of these, for courage, ability, and wisdom, was Roger de Beaumont, and by him William recommended the duchess to be advised in all matters of domestic policy. He also associated with the duchess in the regency their eldest son, Robert; and this youth, who had just completed his thirteenth year, was nominally the military chief of Normandy during the absence of his sire.

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[1] Bayeux tapestry. [2] Wace. [3] William of Poitou. Wace. Malmesbury.

The invasion of England was by no means a popular measure with any class of William's subjects; and during the time that his armament remained wind-bound at St. Vallery, the common soldiers began to murmur in their tents. "The man must be mad," they said, "to persist in going to subjugate a foreign country, since God, who withheld the wind, opposed him; that his father, who was surnamed Robert le Diable, purposed something of the kind, and was in like manner frustrated; and that it was the fate of that family to aspire to things beyond them, and to find God their adversary."[1] When the duke heard of these disheartening reports, he called a council of his chiefs, at which it was agreed that the body of St. Vallery should be brought forth, to receive the offerings and vows of those who should feel disposed to implore his intercession for a favourable wind.[2] Thus artfully did he, instead of interposing the authority of a sovereign and a military leader to punish the language of sedition and mutiny among his troops, oppose superstition to superstition, to amuse the short-sighted instruments of his ambition. The bones of the patron saint of the port were accordingly brought forth, with great solemnity, and exposed in their shrine on the green turf beneath the canopy of heaven, for the double purpose of receiving the prayers of the pious and the contributions of the charitable.[3] The Norman chroniclers affirm that the shrine was half buried in the heaps of gold, silver, and precious things which were showered upon it by the crowds of votaries who came to pay their respects to the saints. Thus were the malcontents amused till the wind changed.

In the mean time William was agreeably surprised by the arrival of his duchess at the port in a splendid vessel of war, called the Mora,[4] which she had caused to be built unknown to him, and adorned in the most royal style of magnificence, for his acceptance. The effigy of their youngest son (William), formed of gilded bronze, some writers say of gold, was placed at the prow of this vessel, with his face turned towards England, holding a trumpet to his lips with one hand, and bearing in the other a bow, with the arrow aimed at England. It seemed as if the wind had only delayed in order to enable Matilda to offer this gratifying and auspicious gift to her departing lord; for scarcely had the acclamations with which it was greeted by the admiring host died away, when the long-desired breeze sprang up, "and a joyful clamour," says Malmesbury, "then arising, summoned every one to the ships." The duke himself, first launching from the continent into the deep, led the way in the Mora, which by day was distinguished by a blood-red flag,[1] and, as soon as it was dark, carried a light at the mast-head, as a beacon to guide the other ships. The first night, the royal leader so far outsailed his followers, that when morning dawned the Mora was in the mid-seas alone, without a single sail of her convoy in sight, though these were a thousand in number. Somewhat disturbed at this circumstance, William ordered the master of the Mora to go to the topmast and look out, and bring him word what he had seen.

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[1] Malmesbury. Wace. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Wace.

The reply was, "Nothing but sea and sky."—"Go up again," said the duke, "and look out." The man cried out, "That he saw four specks in the distance, like the sails of ships."—"Look once again," cried William: then the master exclaimed, "I see a forest of tall masts and a press of sails bearing gallantly towards us."[2]

Rough weather occurred during the voyage, but it is remarkable that, out of so numerous a fleet, only two vessels were lost. In one of these was a noted astrologer, who had taken upon himself to predict that the expedition would be entirely successful, for that Harold would resign England to the duke without a battle. William neither believed in omens nor encouraged fortune-telling, and when he heard the catastrophe of the unfortunate soothsayer who had thought proper to join himself to the armament, shrewdly observed, "Little could he have known of the fate of others, who could not foresee his own."[3]

On the 28th of September, 1066, the Norman fleet made the port of Pevensey, on the coast of Sussex. Wace's chronicle of the Norman conquest affords a graphic picture of the disembarkation of the duke and his armament. The knights and archers landed first.[1] After the soldiers, came the carpenters, armourers, and masons, with their tools in their hands, planes, saws, axes, and other implements slung to their sides. Last of all came the duke, who, stumbling as he leaped to shore, measured his majestic height upon the beach. Forthwith all raised a cry of distress. "An evil sign is here!" exclaimed the superstitious Normans; but the duke, who in recovering himself had filled his hands with sand, cried out in a loud and cheerful voice, "See! *seigneurs*; by the splendour of God I have seized England with my two hands.[2] Without challenge no prize can be made, and that which I have grasped I will, by your good help, maintain."

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[1] Thierry's Anglo-Normans.

[2] Thierry's Anglo-Normans.

[3] Wace Henderson.

On this, one of his followers ran forward, and snatching a handful of thatch from the roof of a hut, brought it to the duke, exclaiming merrily, "Sire, come forward, and receive *seizin.*[3] I give you seizin, in token that this realm is yours." "I accept it," replied the duke, "and may God be with us!"[4] They then sat down and dined together on the beach; afterwards, they sought for a spot whereon to rear a wooden fort, which they had brought in disjointed pieces in their ships from Normandy.

Matilda has, in a curious section of the Bayeux tapestry, shown us the manner in which the trusty followers of her lord carried the disjointed frame-work of this timber fortress to the shore. The soldiers assisted the carpenters and other craftsmen in this arduous undertaking, and the duke encouraged and stimulated them in this union of labour to such good purpose, that before even-fall they had finished their building, fortified it, and supped merrily therein. Here the duke tarried four days. William had, through the agency of Matilda's brother-in-law, Tostig, arranged measures with Harfager, king of Norway, that their attacks upon England should be simultaneous; but the contrary winds which had detained his fleets so long at St. Vallery, had speeded the sails of his northern ally, so that Harfager and Tostig entered the Tyne with three hundred ships, and commenced their work of rapine and devastation a full fortnight before the arrival of the Norman armament. Harold was thus at liberty to direct his whole strength against his fraternal foe and Harfager. The intelligence that both Tostig and Harfager were defeated and slain at Stanford-bridge reached William four days after his landing at Pevensey,[1] while he lay entrenched in his wooden citadel, waiting for a communication from his confederates before he ventured to advance farther up the country. On receiving this unfavourable news, William manifested no consternation or surprise, but turning to his nobles, said, "You see the astrologer's prediction was false. We cannot win the land without a battle; and here I vow, that if it shall please God to give me the victory, that, on whatever spot it shall befall, I will there build a church to be consecrated to the blessed Trinity, and to St. Martin, where perpetual prayers shall be offered for the sins of Edward the Confessor, for my own sins, the sins of Matilda my spouse, and the sins of such as have attended me in this expedition, but more particularly for the sins of such as may fall in the battle."[2] This vow greatly reassured his followers, and appears to have been considered by the valiant Normans as a very comfortable arrangement. Hard work, however, it must have prepared for the priests, who had to sing and pray away the sins of all the parties specified, if we take into consideration who and what manner of people they were.

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[1] There is a tradition in the north of England, that the foremost man of this company to touch the land of promise was the ancestor of the Stricklands of Sizergh-castle, in Westmoreland, who derive their name and arms from this circumstance. They show the sword in the ancient banqueting-room in the D'Eyncourt tower of Sizergh-castle, with which it is asserted by that venerable gossip, tradition, that the redoubted chief first struck the land at Pevensey. The weapon, which appears formed for a giant's grasp, is not, however, we imagine, of earlier date than the days of Edward III., and greatly resembles the sword of state belonging to that monarch which is shown in Westminster-abbey. It is more probable that it pertained to sir Thomas Strickland, who attended the victorious Edward in his French campaigns, than to the Norman founder of his lineage, who was indebted, not to his foreign comrades, but to the English spectators of the disembarkation for his Saxon surname.

[2] Wace. Ordericus Vitalis.

[3] Wace. Simeon Dunelm. Matthew of Westminster. This ceremony is still observed in the transfer of some copyhold estates. Formerly a turf from a field, and a piece of thatch from the roof of a tenement, were all the conveyance required to give the purchaser a legal title of possession

[4] Wace.

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[1] Saxon Annals. Malmesbury. S. Dunelm. Henry Huntingdon. Wace.

[2] Wace.

Harold, meantime, was far beyond the Humber, and in high spirits at the signal victory he had obtained at Stanfordbridge, and the delusive idea that the duke of Normandy had delayed his threatened invasion till the spring,[1] as the father of Matilda had deceitfully informed him. But the intelligence of the arrival of these unwelcome guests was too soon conveyed to him by a knight from the neighbourhood of Pevensey, who had heard the outcry of the peasants on the coast of Sussex when they saw the great fleet arrive; and being aware of the project of the Norman duke, had posted himself behind a hill, where, unseen himself, he had watched the disembarkation of this mighty host and their proceedings on the shore till they had built up and entrenched their wooden fortress, which, being done with such inconceivable rapidity, appeared to him like the work of enchantment. Sorely troubled at what he had seen, the knight girded on his sword, and taking lance in hand, mounted his fleetest steed, and tarried not by the way, either for rest or refreshment, till he had found Harold, to whom he communicated his alarming tidings in these words: "The Normans have come. They have landed at Hastings, and built up a fort, which they have enclosed with a foss and palisades; and they will rend the land from thee and thine, unless thou defend it well."[2]

In the forlorn hope of ridding himself of his formidable invader, Harold offered to purchase the departure of the Norman duke, telling him "that if silver or gold were his object, he, who had enriched himself with the spoils of the defeated king of Norway, would give him enough to satisfy both himself and his followers."—"Thanks for Harold's fair words," replied William; "but I did not bring so many *écus* into this country to change them for his *esterlins*.[3] My purpose in coming is to claim this realm, which is mine according to the gift of king Edward, which was confirmed by Harold's oath."—

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[1] Speed.

[2] Wace.

[3] Ibid. A play on words, meaning *crowns* and *shillings; écu* meaning a shield, as well as the coin called a crown

"Nay, but you ask too much of us, sire," returned the messenger, by whom the pacific offer had been made; "my lord is not so pressed that he should resign his kingdom at your desire. Harold will give you nothing but what you can take from him, unless in a friendly way, as a condition for your departure, which he is willing to purchase with large store of silver and gold and fine garments; but if you accept not his offer, know that he is ready to give you battle on Saturday next, if you be in the field on that day."[1]

The duke accepted this challenge; and on the Friday evening preceding that fatal day for the Saxon cause, Harold planted his gonfanon on the very spot where Battle-abbey now stands. The Normans and English being equally apprehensive of attack during the season of darkness, kept watch and ward that night, but employed their vigils in a very different manner. The English, according to the report of contemporary chroniclers, kept up their spirits with a riotous carouse, crying "Wassail!" and "Drink heal!"[2] dancing, laughing, and gambling all night. The Normans, on the contrary, being in a devout frame of mind, made confessions of their sins, and employed the precious moments in recommending themselves to the care of God.

The battle joined on the 14th of October, Harold's birthday, on a spot about seven miles from Hastings, called Heathfield, where the town of Battle now stands. When William was arming for the encounter, in his haste and agitation he unwittingly put on his hauberk the hind part before.[3] He quickly changed it; but perceiving, from the looks of consternation among the by-standers that his mistake had been noticed, and construed into an omen of ill, he smilingly observed, "I have seen many a man who, if such a thing had happened to him, would not have entered the battle-field; but I never believed in omens, nor have I ever put my faith in fortune-tellers or divinations of any kind, for my trust is in God. Let not this mischance discourage you, for if this change import aught, it is that the power of my dukedom shall be turned into a kingdom,—yea, a king shall I be, who have hitherto been but a duke."[1] Then the duke called for the good steed which had been presented to him as a token of friendship by the king of Spain.

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[1] Malmesbury. Matthew of Westminster. Wace.

[2] Meaning, "Wish health," and "Drink health."

[3] Malmesbury. Wace. William of Poitou.

Matilda has done justice to this noble charger in her Bayeux tapestry. It is represented as caparisoned for the battle, and led by Gualtier Giffart, the duke's squire. There is in the same group the figure of a knight armed cap-à-pié, in the close fitting ring-armour and nasal conical helmet worn by the Norman chivalry of that era, with a gonfanon attached to his lance something after the fashion of the streamer which forms part of the paraphernalia of the modern lancer, with this difference only, that the gonfanon of the ancient knight was adorned with his device or armorial bearing, and served the purpose of a banner or general rallying point for his followers. The knightly figure in the Bayeux tapestry which I have just described, is generally believed to have been designed for the veritable effigies of the redoubtable conqueror of this realm, or at any rate as correct a resemblance of him as his loving spouse Matilda could produce in cross-stitch. He is delineated in the act of extending his hand to greet his favourite steed.

"The duke," says Wace, "took the reins, put foot in stirrup, and mounted; and the good horse pawed, pranced, reared himself up, and curvetted." The viscount of Toazay, who stood by, thus expressed to those around him his admiration of the duke's fine appearance and noble horsemanship:[2] "Never," said he, "have I seen a man so fairly armed, nor one who rode so gallantly, and became his hauberk so well, or bore his lance so gracefully. There is no other such knight under heaven! A fair count he is, and a fair king he will be. Let him fight, and he will overcome; and shame be to him who shall fail him!"[3]

The Normans were drawn up in three bodies Montgomery and Fitz-Osborn led the first, Geoffrey Martel led the second, and the duke himself headed the third, which was composed of the flower of Normandy, and kept in reserve till the proper moment for its effective advance should be ascertained by its skilful and puissant leader. Taillefer, the warrior minstrel of Normandy, rode gallantly at the head of the chivalry of his native land, singing the war-song of Rollo.[1] William had that day three horses killed under him, without losing a drop of his own blood; finding, however, that Harold had succeeded in rallying a strong body of men around him on one of the heights, with the evident intention of keeping possession of that vantage ground till the approaching night should favour the Saxons' retreat, he made his last desperate charge upon the people of the land. In this attack it is supposed that Harold was slain by a random arrow, which was shot through the left eye into his brain.

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[1] Wace. [2] Ibid. [3] Wace. Chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy.

The victorious duke pitched his tent that night in the field of the dead, which, in memory of the dreadful slaughter that had dyed the earth to crimson, was ever after called by him the vale of *Sanguelac*.[2] This fiercely contested battle cost William the lives of six thousand of his bravest followers; but Malmesbury, and other accredited historians of that time, rate the loss of the Saxons at threescore thousand men.[3] When the duchess-regent of Normandy, Matilda, received the joyful tidings of the victory which her lord had obtained at Hastings, she was engaged in her devotions in the chapel of the Benedictine priory of Nôtre Dame, in the fields near the suburbs of St. Sever; and after returning her thanksgivings to the God of battles for the success of her consort's arms, she ordered that the priory should henceforth be called, in memory of that circumstance, *Nôtre Dame de Bonnes Nouvelles.* And by that name it is distinguished to this day.[1]

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[1] Malmesbury. Matthew of Westminster. Henry of Huntingdon. Speed. Rapin. Chron. de Bello Wil. Gemet.

[2] Saxon Annals. Speed. Ordericus says it was called so long before this battle.

[3] The following day was devoted by the Norman conquerors to the interment of their dead; and William gave leave and licence to the Saxon peasants to perform the like charitable office to the remains of their unfortunate countrymen. Search was made for the body of Harold, but at first in vain. The spoilers had stripped and gashed the victims of the fight, so that it was difficult to distinguish between the mortal remains of the leader and the serf. Githa, the mother of Harold, had been herself unable to identify the body of her beloved son; but there was one whose fond eye no change in the object of her affection could deceive; this was a Saxon lady of great beauty, Edith, surnamed Swans-Hals, or the Swan-necked. She had formerly been on those terms with Harold which had rendered her only too familiar with his personal characteristics, and by her his corpse was recognised. Githa, it is said, offered to purchase it of William at the price of its weight in gold; but he yielded it without a ransom to the afflicted mother, either through a generous impulse of compassion, or with a view of conciliating the kindred of the deceased. He also cashiered a Norman soldier, who boasted of having gashed the leg of the royal Saxon after he had fallen. The mother of Harold buried her son in Waltham-abbey, placing over his tomb the simple but expressive sentence, HAROLD INFELIX.—Thierry. Chronicle of Waltham. Malmesbury.

The coronation of the mighty forefather of our present line of sovereigns took place at Westminster, on Monday the 25th of December, being Christmas-day, called by our Saxon ancestors, Midwinter-day Splendid preparations were made in the sister cities of London and Westminster for the celebration of the twofold festival of the Nativity of our Lord and the inauguration of the new sovereign. On the afternoon of Christmas-eve, William of Normandy entered the city on horseback with his victorious followers. He took up his lodgings that night at the palace in Blackfriars, where Bridewell now stands. Early in the morning he went by water to London-bridge, where he landed and proceeded to a house near London-stone; after reposing awhile, he set forth with a stately cavalcade gallantly mounted, and rode to Westminster amidst the shouts of a prodigious multitude, who were reconciled by the excitement of the pageant to the idea of receiving for their sovereign a man, whom nature had so admirably qualified to set off the trappings of royalty.[2] Next to his person rode the nobility of England, and those of Normandy followed.

In consequence of the dispute between Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, and the pope, William chose to be crowned and consecrated by the hand of Aldred, archbishop of York,[3] to avoid the possibility of the ceremony being questioned at any future time. He took not the crown, however, as a right of conquest, but by consent of the people; for the archbishop, before he placed the royal circlet on his head, paused, and turning to the English nobles, asked them "if they were willing to have the duke of Normandy for their king?" to which they replied with such continuous acclamations of assent, that the vehemence of their loyalty, more noisy than sincere, had nearly been productive of the most fatal consequences. William had surrounded the abbey and guarded its approaches with a large body of Norman soldiers, as a prudential measure, in case any attempt upon his life should be made by his new vassals; and those trusty guards without the abbey, mistaking the clamorous applause within for a seditious rising amongst the Saxons, with intent to massacre their lord and his Norman followers, in the first emotions of surprise and rage set fire to the adjoining houses by way of reprisals. The flames rapidly communicating to the wooden buildings round about, produced great consternation, and occasioned the loss of many lives. William and the pale and trembling assistant prelates and priests within the church were dismayed, and faltered in the midst of the ceremonial, and with good cause; for if great exertions had not been used by the more sober-minded portion of the Norman guards to extinguish the conflagration, which presently extended to the abbey, that magnificent edifice, with all the illustrious company within its walls, must have been consumed together. Some persons have considered this fire as the work of the Saxon populace, with intent to destroy at one blow the Norman conqueror and his followers, with such of their own countrymen as had forgotten their honour so far as to become, not only witnesses, but assistants, at the coronation of their foe. And this indeed is not improbable, if the Anglo-Saxons of that period had evinced a spirit capable of conceiving and carrying into execution a design of such terrific grandeur for the deliverance of their country. The Norman soldiery could by no means be appeased till their beloved chief came out of the abbey, and showed himself to them in his coronation-robes and diadem.[1]

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[1] Ducarel's Norman Antiquities.

[2] Ingulphus. Ordericus Vitalis.

[3] "Then, on Midwinter-day, archbishop Aldred hallowed him to king at Westminster, and gave him possession with the books of Christ; and also swore him, ere that he would set the crown upon his head, that he would so well govern this nation as any king before him best did, if they would be faithful to him."—Saxon Chronicle

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[1] William of Poitou. Lingard.

MATILDA OF FLANDERS,

QUEEN OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

CHAPTER II.

Matilda assumes the title of queen of England in Normandy—Her regency there—Patronage of learning—Charities—Her vengeance on Brihtric Meaw—Obtains his lands—His imprisonment—Death in prison—William's court at Berkhamstead—Triumphant return to Normandy—Matilda awaits his landing—Triumphal Norman progresses—Revolts in England—William re-appoints Matilda regent—Embarks for England in a storm—William sends for Matilda—She arrives in England with her children—Her coronation at Winchester—Champion at her coronation—Birth of her son Henry—Bayeux tapestry—The dwarf artist, Turold—Matilda's daughter—Revolt of the English—Queen Matilda's return to Normandy—Regent there the third time—Her passionate love for her eldest son—Death of her father—Dissensions of her brothers—Ill effects of her absence—Separate governments of William and Matilda—King of France attacks Matilda—Her able government—Discontent of Norman ladies—Scandalous reports—William's supposed conjugal infidelity—Matilda's cruelty to her rival—Duke of Bretagne invades Normandy—Marriage with Matilda's second daughter—Dissensions in the royal family—Matilda's partiality to her son Robert—Her second son, prince Richard—His death—New Forest.

"OUR mistress Matilda," says William of Poitou,[1] the chaplain of the Conqueror, "had already assumed the name of queen, though she was not yet crowned. She had governed Normandy during the absence of her lord with great prudence and skill." So firmly, indeed, had that authority been sustained, that, though the whole flower and strength of Normandy had followed the fortunes of their warlike duke to the shores of England, not one of the neighbouring princes had ventured to molest the duchess-regent. Her kinsman, the emperor Henry, had engaged, in event of any aggression on the part of France or Bretagne, to defend Normandy with the whole strength of Germany, and she also had a powerful neighbour and protector in the earl of Flanders, her father; but great credit was certainly due to her own political conduct, in keeping the duchy free, both from external embroilments and internal strife at such a momentous period. Her government was very popular as well as prosperous in Normandy, where, surrounded by the most learned men of the age, she advanced in no slight degree the progress of civilization and refinement. The encouragement she afforded to arts and letters has won for this princess golden reports in the chronicle lore of that age.[1]

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[1] This elegant author, who is also called Pictaviensis, was archdeacon of Lisieux. His chronicle of the Conquest of England is written in very flowing language, greatly resembling in style an heroic poem. It abounds with eulogiums on his royal patron, but is extremely valuable on account of the personal history which it contains. It is sometimes called the Domestic Chronicle of William of Normandy.

Well aware was Matilda of the importance it is to princes to enlist in their service the pens of those who possess the power of defending or undermining thrones, and whose influence continues to bias the minds of men after the lapse of ages. "This princess," says Ordericus Vitalis, "who derived her descent from the kings of France and emperors of Germany, was even more distinguished for the purity of her mind and manners than for her illustrious lineage. As a queen she was munificent, and liberal of her gifts. She united beauty with gentle breeding and all the graces of Christian holiness. While the victorious arms of her illustrious spouse subdued all things before him, she was indefatigable in alleviating distress in every shape, and redoubled her alms. In a word, she exceeded all commendations, and won the love of all hearts."

Such is the character which one of the most eloquent and circumstantial historians of the eleventh century has given of Matilda. Yet Ordericus Vitalis, as a contemporary witness, could scarcely have been ignorant of the dark stain which the first exercise of her newly-acquired power in England has left upon her memory. The Chronicle of Tewkesbury, which states that Brihtric Meaw, the lord of the honour of Gloucester, when he resided at her father's court as ambassador from Edward the Confessor had refused to marry Matilda, adds, that in the first year of the reign of William the Conqueror, Matilda obtained from her lord the grant of all Brihtric's lands and honours, and that she then caused the unfortunate Saxon to be seized at his manor of Hanelye, and conveyed to Winchester, where he died in prison and was privately buried.[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. William of Poitou.

Thus, then, does it appear that Matilda, after having enjoyed for fourteen years the greatest happiness as a wife and mother, had secretly brooded over the bitter memory of the slight that had been offered to her in early youth, for the purpose of inflicting the deadliest vengeance in return on the man who had rejected the love she had once condescended to offer. This circumstance is briefly related, not only in a general, but a topographical history, without comment, and it is in no slight degree confirmed by the records of the Domesday-book, where it appears that Avening, Tewkesbury, Fairford, Thornbury, Whitenhurst, and various other possessions in Gloucestershire, belonging to Brihtric, the son of Algar, were granted to Matilda by the Conqueror; and after her death, reverting to the crown, were by William again bestowed on their second son, William Rufus.[2]

Matilda, moreover, deprived Gloucester of its charter and civic liberties, merely because it was the city of the unfortunate Brihtric,—perhaps for showing some sign of resentment for his fate. We fear that the first of our Norman queens must, on this evidence, stand convicted of the crime of wrong and robbery, if not of absolute murder; and if it had been possible to make a *post-mortem* examination on the body of the unfortunate son of Algar, sufficient reason might have been seen, perhaps, for the private nature of his interment. All this wrong was done by agency; for, if dates be correct, Matilda had not yet entered England.[1]

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[1] Chron. Tewkesbury, Bib. Cottonian MSS. Cleopatra, c. 111. Monasticon, vol. iii. p. 59. Leland's Coll., vol. i. p. 78. The author of the continuation of Brut, born in the same age, and written in the reign of Henry I., son of this queen, thus alludes to this circumstance:

"La quele jadis, quant fu pucelle,
Ama un conte d'Angleterre,
Brihtric Mau, le oi nomer,
Apres le roi ki fu riche *ber*.
A lui la pucell envoeia messager,
Pur sa amour a lui procurer:
Mais Brihtric Maude refusa."

'Who, when she was maiden,
Loved a count of England,
Brihtric Mau he was named,
Except the king was no richer man.
To him the virgin sent a messenger,
His love for her to obtain:
But Brihtric refused Maude.'

[2] "Infra scriptas terras tenuit Brihtric, et post Regina Matilda."—Domesday-book, tom. ii. p. 100. History of Gloucester.

A few days after his coronation, William, feeling some reason to distrust the Londoners, withdrew to his old quarters at Berkhamstead, where he kept his court, and succeeded in drawing round him many of the most influential of the Saxon princes and thanes, to whom, in return for their oaths of allegiance, he restored their estates and honours. His next step, for the mutual satisfaction of his Norman followers and Saxon subjects, was to lay the foundation of the church and abbey of St. Martin, now called Battle-abbey, where perpetual prayers were directed to be offered up for the repose of the souls of all who had fallen in that sanguinary conflict.

William having been now six months separated from his wife and family, his desire to embrace them once more, and to display to his Norman subjects his newly acquired grandeur, induced him to spend the Easter festival in Normandy with Matilda. Previous to his departure, he placed strong Norman garrisons in all his castles, and carried with him to Normandy all the leading men among the Anglo-Saxons. Among these were Edgar Atheling, Morcar, Edwin, and Waltheof.[2] He re-embarked in the Mora, in the month of March, 1067, and, with the most splendid company that ever sailed from England, crossed the seas, and landed on his native shore, a little below the abbey of Fescamp. Matilda was there, with her children,[1] in readiness to receive and welcome her illustrious lord, who was greeted with the most enthusiastic rapture by all classes of his subjects. For joy of William's return the solemn fast of Lent was this year kept as a festival; all labour was suspended, and nothing but mirth and pleasure prevailed in his native Normandy.[2]

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[1] In addition to our numerous ancient authorities regarding Brihtric Meaw, we subjoin this important extract from a work by one of the most learned antiquarian historians of the age: "Brihtric, the son of Algar, a Saxon thane, is stated in Domesday to have held this manor in the reign of Edward the Confessor; but having given offence to Maud, the daughter of Baldwin count of Flanders, previous to her marriage with William duke of Normandy, by refusing to marry her himself, his property was seized by that monarch on the conquest, and bestowed, seemingly in revenge, upon the queen."—Ellis's History of Thornbury Castle. Bristol, 1839.

[2] William of Poitou. Malmesbury. S. Dunelm. Walsingham.

William appears to have had infinite pleasure in displaying, not only to his wife and family, but to the foreign ambassadors, the costly spoils which he had brought over from England.[3] The quantity and exquisite workmanship of the gold and silver plate, and, withal, the richness of the embroidered garments wrought by the skilful hands of the Anglo-Saxon ladies, (then esteemed so inestimably precious in all parts of Europe, that they were called, by distinction, *Anglicum opus*,[4]) excited the admiration and astonishment of all beholders; but more particularly did the splendid dress of his guards, and the magnificence and beauty of the long-haired and moustached Anglo-Saxon nobles by whom he was attended, attract the wonder of the foreign princes and peers.

On the 18th of June, Matilda's newly erected abbey-church of the Holy Trinity, being now completed, was consecrated with great pomp, in the presence of the royal foundress and her victorious lord. On the same day, duke William presented at the altar their infant daughter Cecilia, and devoted her to the service of God.[5] A grand, yet painfully exciting pageant that scene must have been, for who could then answer how far the heart of the unconscious babe, who was thus devoted to a life of religious celibacy, obedience, humility, poverty, and seclusion from the world, might hereafter acquiesce in the sacrifice to which her parents were devoting her? But what a subject for the pencil of the historic painter, that church in its fresh glorious beauty!—thronged with a venerating congregation of nobles, ladies, burghers, soldiers, peasants, mariners, and craftsmen, clad in the picturesque costumes of their various ranks and callings, interspersed with the victorious Norman and vanquished Saxon chiefs, whose descendants are now blended into one mighty people,—the beautiful duchess Matilda, invested with the regal insignia of the queenly rank to which her warlike consort's late achievements had elevated her, surrounded with all her blooming progeny, yet looking with fonder maternal interest on the chosen lamb which had just been separated from that fair flock, to be presented by the conqueror of England as a thank-offering to the God of battles, who had prospered him in his late enterprise, and given him a name greater than that of his far-famed predecessor, Rollo.[1]

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[1] William of Poitou. Henderson.

[2] William of Poitou.

[3] Ibid.

[4] English work.

[5] Hardy's Notes on William of Malmesbury.

The whole summer was spent by William in a series of triumphant progresses, through the towns and cities of Normandy, with his queen-duchess.[2] Meanwhile, the spirit of freedom was crushed, but not extinguished, among the people of England, and the absence of the Conqueror was regarded as a favourable opportunity for expelling the unwelcome locusts who had fastened upon the land, and were devouring its fatness. A secret plot was organized for a simultaneous rising throughout England, and a general massacre of the Normans.[3] But though the terror of William's actual presence was withdrawn for a season, he kept up a strict espionage on the proceedings of the English. The first rumour of what was going on among them, roused him from the career of pleasure which he had been pursuing. Relinquishing the idea of keeping a splendid Christmas with his beloved family, he re-appointed Matilda and his son Robert regents of Normandy, and embarking on a stormy sea, he sailed from Dieppe on the 6th of December.[4] On the 7th he arrived at Winchelsea, and proceeded immediately to London, to the consternation of the malcontents, who thought they were sure of him for the winter season.

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[1] Matilda's foundation possesses a strong historical interest, even as connected with recent events in France. M. de Lamartine, in his beautiful work on the Gironde, when relating the occurrences of the youth of Charlotte Corday, who was brought up in that abbey, gives us this information on its modern destination: "These vast cloisters and chapel of Norman architecture, built in 1066 by Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, after having been deserted, degraded, and forgotten in its ruins until 1730, was then magnificently restored; at this day it forms one of the finest hospitals in France, and one of the most splendid public buildings in the city of Caen."—Vol. iii. p. 57. 1848.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis. Saxon Chronicle. [3] W. Poitou. [4] Ordericus Vitalis.

After the suppression of the revolt, William, perceiving the disadvantages attendant on a queenless court, and feeling withal the greatest desire to enjoy the society of his beautiful consort, despatched a noble company into Normandy, to conduct Matilda and her children to England.[1] She joyfully obeyed the welcome mandate of her lord, and crossed the sea with a stately *cortège* of nobles, knights, and ladies.[2] Among the learned clerks by whom she was attended was the celebrated Gui, bishop of Amiens, who had distinguished himself by an heroic poem on the defeat and fall of Harold.

Matilda arrived in England soon after Easter, in the month of April, 1068, and proceeding immediately to Winchester, was received with great joy by her lord: preparations were instantly commenced for her coronation, which was appointed to take place in that city on Whit-Sunday.[3] The great festivals of the church appear in the middle ages to have been considered by the English as peculiarly auspicious days for the solemnization of coronations and marriages, if we may judge by the frequency of their occurrence at those seasons. Sunday was generally chosen for a coronation-day. William, who had been exceedingly anxious to share his newly acquired honours with Matilda, chose to be re-crowned at the same time, to render the pageant of her consecration more imposing; and farther to conciliate the affections of his English subjects, he repeated for the second time the oath by which he engaged to govern with justice and moderation, and to preserve inviolate that great palladium of English liberty, trial by jury.[4]

This coronation was far more splendid than that which had preceded it in Westminster-abbey, at William's first inauguration, where the absence of the queen and her ladies deprived the ceremony of much of its brilliancy, and the alarming conflagration by which it was interrupted must have greatly abridged the pomp and festivities that had been anticipated on that occasion. Here every thing went off auspiciously. It was in the smiling season of the year, when the days were long and bright, without having attained to the oppressiveness of summer heat. The company, according to the report of contemporary historians, was exceedingly numerous and noble; and the Conqueror, who appears to have been in a wonderfully gracious mood that day, was very sprightly and facetious on the occasion, and conferred favours on all who solicited. The graceful and majestic person of queen Matilda, and the number and beauty of her fine children, charmed the populace, and every one present was delighted with the order and regularity with which this attractive pageant was conducted.[1] The nobles of Normandy attended their duchess to the church; but after the crown was placed on her head by Aldred, archbishop of York, she was served by her new subjects, the English.

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. [2] Ibid.

[3] Florence of Worcester. S. Dunelm. M. Westminster.

[4] S. Dunelm. Saxon Chronicle.

The first occasion on which the office of champion was instituted, is said to have been at this splendid coronation at Winchester, where William caused his consort to be associated with himself in all the honours of royalty.[2] The ceremonial of Matilda's inauguration-banquet afforded precedents for most of the grand feudal offices at subsequent coronations.[3] Among these, the office of 'grand pannetier' has been for some time extinct. His service was to bear the salt and the carving-knives from the pantry to the king's dining-table, and his fees were the salt-cellars, spoons, and knives laid on the royal table. "Forks were not among the royal luxuries at the board of the mighty William and his fair Matilda, who both, in feeding themselves, verified the proverb which says 'that fingers were made before forks.'" —"The grand pannetier likewise served the bread to the sovereign, and received, in addition to the rest of his fees, the bread-cover, called the coverpane. For this service the Beauchamps held the manor of Beauchamp Kibworth. The manor of Addington was likewise granted by the Conqueror to Tezelin, his cook, for composing a dish of white soup called *dillegrout*, which especially pleased the royal palate."

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[1] Henderson.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Glories of Regality.

"When the noble company had retired from the church, and were seated at dinner in the banqueting hall," says Henderson, in his Life of the Conqueror, "a bold cavalier called Marmion,[1] completely armed, rode into the hall, and did at three several times repeat this challenge:—'If any person denies that our most gracious sovereign, lord William, and his spouse Matilda, are not king and queen of England, he is a false-hearted traitor and a liar; and here I, as champion, do challenge him to single combat.'" No person accepted the challenge, and Matilda was called *la reine* ever after.

The same year, Matilda brought into the world her fourth son, Henry, surnamed Beauclerc. This event took place at Selby, in Yorkshire, and was productive of some degree of satisfaction to the people, who considered the English-born prince with far more complacency than his three Norman brethren, Robert, Richard, and William-Rufus. Matilda settled upon her new-born son all the lands she possessed in England and Normandy; they were to revert to him after her death. Tranquillity now appeared to be completely restored; and Matilda, enjoying every happiness as a wife, a mother, and a queen, seemed to be placed at the very summit of earthly prosperity.

Whether it be by accident, or owing to a close attention to the reality he saw before him, it is certain that the antique limner who drew Matilda's portrait has represented the organ of constructiveness in her head as very decidedly developed. She afforded remarkable instances of this propensity in the noble ecclesiastical buildings of which she was the foundress, also in her ingenious and curious example of industry in the Bayeux tapestry, wherein she has wrought the epic of her husband's exploits, from Harold's first landing in Normandy to his fall at Hastings. It is, in fact, a most important historical document, in which the events and costume of that momentous period are faithfully presented to us, by the indefatigable fingers of the first of our Norman queens and her ladies, and certainly deserves a particular description.

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[1] Henderson inaccurately says "Dymock;" it was Marmion. This ceremony, unknown among the Saxon monarchs, was of Norman origin. The lands of Fontenaye, in Normandy, were held by Marmion, one of the followers of William the Conqueror, on the tenure of championship. The office was hereditary in the family of Marmion, and from them, by heirship, descended to the Dymocks of Scrivelsbye.—See Dugdale. The armorial bearings of the Marmions, from the performance of this great service, were,—sable, an arming sword, the point in chief, argent.—Glories of Regality.

This curious monument of antiquity is still preserved in the cathedral of Bayeux, where it is distinguished by the name of "la Tapissière de la Reine Matilde:" it is also called "the duke of Normandy's *toilette*," which simply means the duke's great cloth. It is a piece of canvas, about nineteen inches in breadth, but upwards of sixty-seven yards in length, on which, as we have said, is embroidered the history of the conquest of England by William of Normandy, commencing with the visit of Harold to the Norman court, and ending with his death at the battle of Hastings, 1066.

The leading transactions of those eventful years, the death of Edward the Confessor, and the coronation of Harold in the chamber of the royal dead, are represented in the clearest and most regular order in this piece of needlework, which contains many hundred figures of men, horses, birds, beasts, trees, houses, castles, churches, and ships, all executed in their proper colours, with names and inscriptions in Latin, explanatory of the subject of every section.[1] This pictorial chronicle of her mighty consort's achievements appears to have been, in part at least, designed for Matilda by Turold, a dwarf artist, who, moved by a natural desire of claiming his share in the celebrity which he foresaw would attach to the work, has cunningly introduced his own effigies and name,—thus authenticating the Norman tradition, that he was the person who illuminated the canvas with the proper outlines and colours.[1] It is probable that the wife of the Conqueror and her Norman ladies were materially assisted in this stupendous work of feminine skill and patience by some of the hapless daughters of the land, who, like the Grecian captives described by Homer, were employed in recording the story of their own reverses, and the triumphs of their haughty foes.[2]

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[1] The Bayeux tapestry has lately been much the subject of controversy among some learned individuals, who are determined to deprive Matilda of her traditionary fame as the person from whom this specimen of female skill and industry emanated. Montfaucon, Thierry, Planche, Ducarel, Taylor, and many other important authorities, may be quoted in support of the historical tradition that it was the work of Matilda and her ladies. The brief limits to which we are confined in these biographies, will not admit of our entering into the arguments of those who dispute the fact, though we have carefully examined them; and, with due deference to the judgment of the lords of the creation on all subjects connected with policy and science, we venture to think that our learned friends, the archæologists and antiquaries, would do well to direct their intellectual powers to more masculine objects of inquiry, and leave the question of the Bayeux tapestry (with all other matters allied to needle-craft) to the decision of the ladies, to whose province it peculiarly belongs. It is matter of doubt to us whether one out of the many gentlemen who have disputed Matilda's claims to that work, if called upon to execute a copy of either of the figures on canvas, would know how to put in the first stitch. The whole of the Bayeux tapestry has been engraved, and coloured like the original, by the Society of Antiquaries, who, if they had done nothing else to merit the approbation of the historical world, would have deserved it for this alone.

About this period William laid the foundation of that mighty fortress and royal residence, the Tower of London, which was erected by a priestly architect and engineer, Gundulph bishop of Rochester. He also built the castle of Hurstmonceaux, on the spot which had, in the first instance, been occupied by the wooden fort he brought over from Normandy; and, for the better security of his government, built and strongly garrisoned many other strong fortresses, forming a regular chain of military stations from one end of England to the other.[3] These proceedings excited the jealous displeasure of such of the Anglo-Saxon nobles as had hitherto maintained a sort of passive amity with their Norman sovereign, and they began gradually to desert his court. Among the first to withdraw from the royal circle were the darlings of the people, Edwin and Morcar. William had in the first instance, by the most insidious caresses, and the promise even of giving him one of his daughters in marriage, endeavoured to conciliate Edwin, who was the youngest of the two chieftains, and remarkable for the beauty of his person. The promised bride of Edwin was, however, withheld from him, which exasperated him so much, that he retired with his brother into the north, where they organized a plan with the kings of Scotland and Denmark, and the Welsh princes, for separate but simultaneous attacks upon William, in which the disaffected Saxons were to join.

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[1] Thierry's History of the Anglo-Normans. The figures were, in fact, always prepared for tapestry work by some skilful artist, who designed and traced them out in the same colours that were to be used in silk or woollen by the embroideress; and we are told in the life of St. Dunstan, that "a certain religious lady, being moved with a desire of embroidering a sacerdotal vestment, earnestly entreated the future chancellor of England, who was then a young man in an obscure station of life, but creeping into notice through his excellent taste in such delineations, to draw the flowers and figures, which she afterwards formed with threads of gold."

[2] When Napoleon was preparing to invade England, he brought the Bayeux tapestry forward in a very pompous manner, to revive the recollection of the conquest of this island by William of Normandy.

[3] At Norwich, Warwick, Lincoln, York, Nottingham, &c. &c.

The repeated and formidable revolts of the English, in 1069, compelled William to provide for the safety of Matilda and her children in Normandy.[1] The presence of the queen-duchess was, indeed, no less required there, than that of her warlike lord in England. She was greatly beloved in the duchy, where her government was considered exceedingly able, and the people were beginning to murmur at the absence of the court and the nobility, which, after the states of Normandy had been so severely taxed to support the expense of the English wars, was regarded as a national calamity. It was, therefore, a measure of great political expediency on the part of William to re-appoint Matilda, for the third time, to the regency of Normandy. The name of his eldest son, Robert, was, as before, associated with that of Matilda in the regency; and at parting, the Conqueror entreated his spouse "to pray for the speedy termination of the English troubles, to encourage the arts of peace in Normandy, and to take care of the interests of their youthful heir."[2] The latter injunction was somewhat superfluous; for Matilda's fondness for her first-born betrayed her into the most injudicious acts of partiality in his favour, and in all probability was the primary cause of the dissensions between him and his brothers, and the subsequent rupture between that wrong-headed prince and his royal father. The death of the earl of Flanders, Matilda's father, and the unsettled state of her native country, owing to the strife between her brothers and nephews, greatly troubled her, and added in no slight degree to the anxious cares with which her return to Normandy was clouded, after the brief splendour of her residence in England as queen.[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. Henry Huntingdon.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis. Malmesbury.

The breaking up of the court at Winchester, and the departure of queen Matilda and her children for Normandy, cast a deep gloom on the aspect of William's affairs, while it was felt as a serious evil by the industrious classes, whose prosperity depended on the encouragement extended to their handiworks by the demands of the rich and powerful for those articles of adornment and luxury, in the fabrication of which many hands are profitably employed,—employment being equivalent to wealth with those whose time, ingenuity, or strength can be brought into the market in any tangible form. But where there is no custom, it is useless to tax the powers of the craftsman or artisan to produce articles which are no longer required. This was the case in England from the year 1069, when, the queen and ladies of the court having quitted the country, trade languished, employment ceased, and the horrors of civil war were aggravated by the distress of a starving population.

It was, according to most accounts, in this year, 1069, that William, to prevent the people of the land from confederating together in nocturnal assemblies, for the purpose of discussing their grievances and stimulating each other to revolt, compelled them to *couvre feu*, that is to extinguish the lights and fires in their dwellings at eight o'clock every evening, at the tolling of a bell, called from that circumstance the curfew, or *couvre feu*.[2] Such, at any rate, has been the popular tradition of ages, and traces of the custom in many places still remain. William had adopted the same measure, in his early career as duke of Normandy, to secure the better observance of his famous edict for the suppression of brawls and murders in his dominions, called emphatically 'God's peace.'[3]

When William took the field after Matilda's departure, and commenced one of his rapid marches towards York, where Waltheof had encouraged the Danish army to winter, he swore "by the splendour of God," his usual oath, that he would not leave one living soul in Northumberland. As soon as he entered Yorkshire, he began to execute his terrible threats of vengeance, laying the whole country waste with fire and sword. After he had bribed the Danish chief to withdraw, and the long-defended city of York was surrendered at discretion by Waltheof, he won that powerful Saxon leader to his cause by bestowing upon him in marriage his beautiful niece, Judith. These fatal nuptials were solemnized among the ruins of the vanquished city of York, where the Conqueror kept his Christmas amidst the desolation he had wrought.[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] Speed. It was first established at Winchester.—Cassan's Lives of the Bishops of Winchester.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis. The curfew is still tolled in some districts of Normandy, where it is called *La Retraite*.—Ducarel.

The melancholy details of William's work of devastation in the north of England are pathetically recorded by the Saxon chronicle, and we will close the brief annals of the direful years 1070 and 1071 with the death of earl Edwin, the affianced husband of one of the daughters of the Conqueror and Matilda. He was proceeding from Ely to Scotland, charged, as was supposed, with a secret mission from his disinherited kinsman, Edgar, to the king of Scots, when he was intercepted and slain, after a valiant defence against a band of Normans. His death was passionately bewailed by the English, and even the stern nature of the Conqueror was melted into compassion; and he is said to have shed tears when the bleeding head of the young Saxon, with its long flowing hair, was presented to him by the traitors who had beguiled him into the Norman ambush, and instead of conferring the expected reward on the murderers, he condemned them to perpetual exile.[2]

The Saxon bishops had stood forth as champions for the rights and ancient laws of the people, and William, finding it impossible to awe or silence these true patriots, proceeded to deprive them of their benefices. It was in vain for the English clergy to appeal to the Roman pontiff for protection, for William was supported by the authority of the new system of church government adopted by the Norman bishops, which was to deprive the people of the use of the Scriptures in the Saxon tongue; thereby rendering one of the best and noblest legacies bequeathed to them by that royal reformer, king Alfred—the translation commenced by him of the Word of God—a dead letter. It was the earnest desire of our Norman sovereigns to silence the Saxon tongue for ever, by substituting in its place the Norman dialect, which was a mixture of French and Danish. It was, however, found to be a more easy thing to subjugate the land, than to suppress the natural language of the people. A change was all that could be effected, by the amalgamation of the two languages, the Normans gradually acquiring as many of the Saxon words and idioms as the Anglo-Saxons were compelled to use of theirs. Latin was used by the learned, as a general medium of communication, and thus became, in a slight degree, mingled with the parlance of the more refined portion of society. From these mingled elements our own copious and expressive language was in process of time formed.

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[1] Matthew Paris.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, p. 521. J. Brompton.

Matilda returned to England in the year 1072: she kept her Easter festival that spring at Winchester with her lord, and her Whitsuntide at Windsor. A fierce controversy between the primates of Canterbury and York, on the nice point of ecclesiastical precedency, which first commenced in the chapel-royal within Winchester-castle, was then terminated in the presence of the king and queen; and an amicable instrument, acknowledging the supremacy of the archbishop of Canterbury was drawn up and witnessed by the signature of William the king, the signature of Matilda the queen,[1] that of the pope's legate, and all the hierarchy and mitred abbots present, who had assembled in convocation on this important matter.

The unsettled state of England had the effect of again dividing William from his beloved queen, and forced them for a considerable time to reign separately,—he in England, and she in Normandy. Matilda, who possessed no inconsiderable talents in the art of government, conducted the regency of Normandy, during all the troubles in which her lord was involved, with great prudence and address. She was placed in a position of peculiar difficulty, in consequence of the revolt of the province of Maine, and the combined hostilities of the king of France and the duke of Bretagne, who had taken advantage of the manner in which William was occupied with the Scotch invasion and the Saxon revolt to attack his continental dominions, and Matilda was compelled to apply to her absent lord for succour. William immediately despatched the son of Fitz-Osborn to assist his fair regent in her military arrangements for the defence of Normandy, and expedited a peace with the king of Scotland, that he might the sooner come to her aid in person with his veteran troops.

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[1] William of Malmesbury; Dr. Giles's translation. See, also, Lanfranc's Letters, edited by the same learned gentleman.

The Norman ladies were at that period extremely malcontent at the long-protracted absence of their lords.[1] The wife of Hugh Grantmesnil, the governor of Winchester, had caused them great uneasiness by the reports which she had circulated of the infidelities of their husbands. These representations had induced the indignant dames to send peremptory messages for the immediate return of their lords. In some instances the warlike Normans had yielded obedience to these conjugal mandates, and returned home, greatly to the prejudice of William's affairs in England. This was the aim of the lady of Grantmesnil, who had for some reason conceived a particular ill-will against her sovereign; and not content with doing every thing in her power to incite his Norman subjects to revolt, she had thought proper to cast the most injurious aspersions on his character as a husband, and insinuated that he had made an attempt on her virtue.[2]

Githa, the mother of Harold, eagerly caught at these reports, which she took great pleasure in circulating. She communicated them to Sweno, king of Denmark, and added, that the reason why Merleswen, a Kentish noble of some importance, had joined the late revolt in England was, because the Norman tyrant had dishonoured his fair niece, the daughter of one of the canons of Canterbury.[3] This tale, whether false or true, came in due course to Matilda's ears, and caused the first conjugal difference that had ever arisen between her and her lord. She was by no means of a temper to take any affront of the kind patiently, and it is said that she caused the unfortunate damsel to be put to death, with circumstances of great cruelty.[1] Hearne, in his notes to Robert of Gloucester, furnishes us with a curious sequel to this tale, extracted from a very ancient chronicle among the Cottonian MSS., which, after relating "that the priest's daughter was privily slain by a confidential servant of Matilda, the queen," adds, "that the Conqueror was so enraged at the barbarous revenge taken by his consort, that, on his return to Normandy, he beat her with his bridle so severely, that she soon after died." Now, it is certain Matilda lived full ten years after the period at which this matrimonial discipline is said to have been inflicted upon her by the strong arm of the Conqueror; and the worthy chronicler himself merely relates it as one of the current rumours of the day. We are willing to hope that the story altogether has originated from the scandalous reports of that malign busy-body of the eleventh century, the lady Grantmesnil; though, at the same time, it is to be feared, that the woman who was capable of inflicting such deadly vengeance on the unfortunate Saxon nobleman who had been the object of her earliest affections, would not have been very scrupulous in her dealings with a female whom she suspected of having rivalled her in her husband's regard. William of Malmesbury bears testimony to the conjugal affection which subsisted between the Conqueror and Matilda, "whose obedience to her husband, and fruitfulness in bringing him so many children," he says, "excited in his mind the tenderest regard towards her." If any cause of anger or mistrust had occurred, during their long separation, to interrupt the conjugal happiness of Matilda and her husband, it was but a passing cloud, for historians all agree that they were living together in a state of the most affectionate union during the year 1074, great part of which was spent by the Conqueror with his family in Normandy.[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. Malmesbury. [2] Henderson. Ordericus Vitalis.

[3] Henderson's Life of the Conqueror. It must be remembered that the marriages of the English clergy were allowed by the Anglo-Saxon catholic church till near a quarter of a century afterwards.

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[1] She caused her to be hamstrung.—Rapin. Henderson says Matilda ordered her jaws to be slit.

It was at this period that Edgar Atheling came to the court at Caen, to make a voluntary submission to the Norman sovereign, and to entreat his forgiveness for the several insurrections in which he had been engaged. The Conqueror freely accorded an amnesty, treated him with great kindness, and pensioned him with a daily allowance of a pound of silver,[2] in the hope that this amicable arrangement would secure his government in England from all future disturbances. He was mistaken: fresh troubles had already broken out in that quarter, but this time they proceeded from his own turbulent Norman chiefs; one of them, withal, was the son of his great favourite and trusty kinsman, Fitz-Osborn, who was defeated and taken prisoner[3] by the nobles and prelates of Worcester. The Danish fleet, which had vainly hovered on the coast, waiting for a signal to land troops to assist the conspirators, was fain to retreat without effecting its object. As for the great Saxon earl, Waltheof, who had been drawn into the plot and betrayed by his Norman wife, Judith, to her uncle the Conqueror, he was, after a long suspense, beheaded on a rising-ground just without the gates of Winchester; being the first English nobleman who had died by the hand of a public executioner.[4]

William next pursued his Norman traitor, Ralph de Guader, to the continent, and besieged him in the city of Dol, where he had taken refuge. The young duke of Bretagne, Alan Fergeant, assisted by the king of France, came with a powerful army to the succour of the besieged earl; and William was not only compelled to raise the siege, but to abandon his tents and baggage, to the value of fifteen thousand pounds. His diplomatic talents, however, enabled him to extricate himself from the embarrassing strait in which he had been placed, by a marriage between Alan and his daughter Constance. This alliance was no less advantageous to the princely bridegroom, than agreeable to William and Matilda. The nuptials were celebrated with great pomp, and the bride was dowered with all the lands of Chester, once the possessions of the unfortunate earl Edwin, who had formerly been contracted to one of her sisters.[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. Malmesbury. Saxon Annals.

[2] Saxon Annals. Malmesbury. Brompton.

[3] Fitz-Osborn was a relation of his sovereign, and, before this act of contumacy, stood high in his favour. He was only punished with imprisonment for his share in the conspiracy. After a time his royal master, as a token that he was disposed to pardon him, sent him a costly suit of clothes; but Fitz-Osborn, instead of tendering his grateful acknowledgments for this present, ordered a large fire to be made, and, in the presence of the messenger, burned the rich garments, one by one, with the most insolent expressions of contempt. William was very angry at the manner in which his unwonted graciousness was received by his vassal kinsman, but inflicted no severer punishment than a lengthened term of imprisonment.—Henderson.

[4] Ordericus Vitalis.

At the close of this year died Edith, the widow of Edward the Confessor. She had retired to a convent, but was treated with the respect and honour of a queen-dowager, and was buried in Westminster-abbey. She was long survived by her unfortunate sister-in-law, Edith or Algitha, the widow of Harold, the other Saxon queen-dowager, who, having had woful experience of the calamities of greatness and the vanity of earthly distinctions, voluntarily resigned her royal title, and passed the residue of her days in obscurity.

In the year 1075, William and Matilda, with their family, kept the festival of Easter with great pomp at Fescamp, and attended in person the profession of their eldest daughter Cecilia, who was there veiled a nun by the archbishop John.[2] "This royal maid," says Ordericus Vitalis, "had been educated with great care in the convent of Caen, where she was instructed in all the learning of the age, and several sciences. She was consecrated to the holy and indivisible Trinity, took the veil under the venerable abbess Matilda, and faithfully conformed to all the rules of conventual discipline. Cecilia succeeded this abbess in her office, having, for fourteen years, maintained the highest reputation for sanctity and wisdom. From the moment that she was dedicated to God by her father, she became a true servant of the Most High, and continued a pure and holy virgin, attending to the pious rules of her order for a period of fifty-two years."

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[1] Saxon Annals. S. Dunelm. Malmesbury.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis. Malmesbury.

Soon after the profession of the lady Cecilia, those fatal divisions began to appear in the royal family, of which Matilda is accused of having sown the seeds by the injurious partiality she had shown for Robert, her first-born. This prince, having been associated with his royal mother in the regency of Normandy from the age of fourteen, had been brought more into public than was perhaps desirable at a period of life when presumptuous ideas of self-importance are only too apt to inflate the mind. Robert, during his father's long absence, was not only emancipated from all control, but had accustomed himself to exercise the functions of a sovereign in Normandy by anticipation, and to receive the homage and flattery of all ranks of people in the dominions to which he was the heir. The Conqueror, it seems, had promised that he would one day bestow the duchy of Normandy on him; and Robert, having represented the ducal majesty for nearly eight years, considered himself an injured person when his royal father took the power into his own hands once more, and exacted from him the obedience of a subject, and the duty of a son.[1] There was also a jealous rivalry between Robert and his two younger brothers, William-Rufus and Henry. William-Rufus, notwithstanding his rude, boisterous manners, and the apparent recklessness of his disposition, had an abundant share of worldcraft, and well knew how to adapt himself to his father's humour, so that he was no less a favourite with the Conqueror than Robert was with Matilda. Robert had been in his infancy espoused to Margaret, the heiress of Herbert, the last earl of that province. The little countess died while they were yet children, and William of Normandy, who had taken her lands under his wardship, annexed them to his own dominions after her death. When the juvenile widower became of age, he considered himself entitled to the earldom and lands of Maine in right of his deceased wife, and claimed them of his father, who put him off with fair words, but withheld the territory; though the people of Maine demanded Robert for their lord, and, at the surrender of the revolted city of Mans, it was among the articles of capitulation that he should receive the investiture of the earldom. This condition was violated by the Conqueror, who had no mind to part with any portion of his acquisitions during his life; verifying in this, as in every other action, the predictions of the gossips at his birth, "that he would grasp every thing within his reach, and that which he had once grasped he would keep."[1] This was a perpetual source of discontent to Robert, who, though recklessly generous, was of a proud and irritable temperament.

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

In the year 1076, while Matilda and William were with their family at the castle of l'Aigle, their two younger sons, William and Henry, in wanton play, threw some dirty water from the balcony of an upper apartment on Robert and some of his partisans, who were walking in the court below. The fiery heir of Normandy construed this act of boyish folly into an act of studied contempt; and being just then in an irritable and excited frame of mind, he drew his sword and rushed up stairs, with a threat of taking deadly vengeance on the youthful transgressors who had offered this insult to him before the whole court. This occasioned a prodigious tumult and uproar in the castle, and nothing but the presence and stern authority of the king, who, hearing the alarm, burst into the room with his drawn sword in his hand, could have prevented fatal consequences.[2] Robert, not obtaining the satisfaction he expected for the affront he had received, privately retired from the court that very evening, followed by a party of the young nobility whom he had attached to his cause.[3]

Richard, the second son of William and Matilda, does not appear to have taken any part in these quarrels. He was the pupil of the learned Lanfranc, and was probably occupied with studious pursuits, as he is said to have been a prince of great promise, and of an amiable disposition.[4] He died in England, in the flower of his youth. According to popular tradition, he was gored by a stag, while hunting in the New Forest, which caused his death; but some historians record that he died of a fever, occasioned by the malaria in the depopulated district of Hampshire, at the time when so many

[1] Ordericus Vitalis. [2] Ibid. [3] Malmesbury.
[4] Camden. Saxon Chronicle.

thousands of the unfortunate Saxons perished by famine, in consequence of having been driven from their homes when the Conqueror converted that once fertile part of England into a chase, for the enjoyment of his favourite amusement of hunting. Prince Richard was buried in Winchester cathedral: a slab of stone, marked with his name, is still seen there.

Drayton gives a political reason for the depopulation of the shore of Hampshire, occasioned by the enclosure of the New Forest, which is well worth the consideration of the historical reader:

> "Clear Avon, coming in, her sister Stour doth call,
> And at New Forest's foot into the sea doth fall;
> That forest now, whose site e'en boundless seems to lie,
> Its being erst received from William's tyranny,
> Who framed laws to keep those beasts he planted then,
> His lawless will from hence before had driven men:
> That where the earth was warmed with Winter's festal fires,
> The melancholic hare now forms in tangled brakes and briers;
> And on sites of churches, grown with nettles, fern, and weeds,
> Stands now the aged ranpick trunk, where ploughmen cast their seeds.
> The people were by William here cut off from every trade,
> That on this spot the Norman still might enter to invade;
> And on this desolated place and unfrequented shore,
> New forces evermore might land to aid those here before."

The Saxon chronicle comments on the oppressive statutes enacted by the Norman conqueror for the preservation of game in an eloquent strain of indignant irony, and says, " he loved the tall deer as if he had been their father." That game-laws were in existence at a much earlier period, is most certain; but it was during this reign that they were rendered a grievance to the people, and assumed the character of a moral wrong in the legislature of the country. The more enlightened policy of modern jurisprudence has in some degree ameliorated the rigorous penalties enacted by our Norman line of sovereigns against poaching in its various departments, but the bitterness engendered by the spirit of those laws remains in full force in the hearts of those classes against whom the statutes are supposed to point, and is constantly acted upon by persons assuming the office of political agitators, for the purpose of creating divisions between the people and their rulers.

MATILDA OF FLANDERS,

QUEEN OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

CHAPTER III.

Matilda mediates between her husband and son—Robert's insolence and rebellion—Matilda supplies him with money—Conqueror seizes Matilda's agent—Conqueror's reproaches—Queen's answer—Robert's military prowess—Field of Archembraye—Robert wounds the Conqueror—His penitence—Matilda intercedes—Conqueror writes to his son—Robert pardoned—Conqueror's legislation in England—Domesday-book—Royal revenue—Queen of England's perquisites and privileges—Her dues at Queenhithe—Officers of royal household—Matilda's court the model of succeeding ones—She continues to govern Normandy—Her visit to the monastery of Ouche—Illness and death of her second daughter—Fresh cause of sorrow to the queen—Robert's dissensions with his father—Matilda's distress—Applies to a hermit—His vision, and message to the queen—Her grief and lingering illness—Dying of a broken heart—The Conqueror hastens from England—She dies—Her obsequies—Her alms—Tomb—Epitaph—Will—Articles of dress named therein—Portrait (*see frontispiece*)—Her children—The Conqueror's deep affliction—Disquiets after the death of the queen—Fatal accident to the Conqueror—Death—His body plundered—Accidents and interruptions at his funeral—Monument—Portrait—Destruction of his tomb—Of Matilda's tomb—Her sapphire ring—Their bodies re-interred—Matilda's tomb restored—Final destruction at French revolution.

THE feud between her royal husband and her first-born was very painful to Matilda, whose anxious attempts to effect a reconciliation were unavailing. When Robert's passion was somewhat cooled, he consented to see his father, but the interview was any thing but friendly. Ordericus Vitalis gives the following particulars of the conference.

Robert assumed a very high tone, and repeated his demand of being invested with the duchies of Normandy and Maine. This was, of course, refused by the Conqueror, who sternly bade his ambitious heir "remember the fate of Absalom, and the misfortunes of Rehoboam, and not to listen to the evil counsellors who wished to seduce him from the paths of duty." On which Robert insolently replied, "That he did not come there to listen to sermons, with which he had been nauseated by his tutors when he was learning grammar, but to claim the investiture which had been promised to him. Answer me positively," continued he; "are not these things my right? Have you not promised to bestow them on me?"[1]—"It is not my custom to strip till I go to bed," replied the Conqueror; "and as long as I live, I will not deprive myself of my native realm, Normandy; neither will I divide it with another, for it is written in the holy evangelists, 'Every kingdom that is divided against itself shall become desolate.'[2] I won England by mine own good sword; the vicars of Christ placed the diadem of its ancient kings on my brow and the sceptre in mine hand, and I swear that all the world combined shall not compel me to delegate my power to another. It is not to be borne, that he who owes his existence to me should aspire to be my rival in mine own dominions." But Robert scornfully rejoined, with equal pride and disrespect, "If it be inconvenient for you to keep your word, I will withdraw from Normandy and seek justice from strangers, for here I will not remain as a subject."[3]

With these words he quitted the royal presence, and, with a party of disaffected nobles, took refuge with Matilda's brother, Robert earl of Flanders, surnamed 'le Frison,' from his having married the countess of Friesland. From this uncle Robert received very bad advice, and the king of France endeavoured, by all the means in his power, to widen the breach between the undutiful heir of Normandy and his father. Encouraged by these evil counsellors, Robert busied himself in fomenting discontents and organizing a formidable faction in his father's dominions, whence he drew large sums, in the shape of presents and loans, from many of the vassals of the ducal crown, who were willing to ingratiate themselves with the heir-apparent, and to conciliate the favour of the queen-duchess, whose partial fondness for her eldest son was well known.

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. Hemmingford. Walsingham.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis. S. Dunelm. P. Daniel.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis.

The supplies thus obtained Robert improvidently lavished among his dissolute companions, both male and female. In consequence of this extravagance, he was occasionally reduced to the greatest inconvenience. When under the pressure of those pecuniary embarrassments, which could not fail to expose him to the contempt of the foreign princes who espoused his quarrel against his father, he was wont to apply to his too indulgent mother, Matilda, by whom he was so passionately beloved that she could refuse him nothing; from her private coffers she secretly supplied him with large sums of silver and gold, and when these resources were exhausted by the increasing demands of her prodigal son, Matilda had the weakness to strip herself of her jewels and rich garments for the same purpose.[1] This system continued even when Robert had taken up arms against his father and sovereign. Roger de Beaumont,—that faithful minister whom William had, previous to his first embarkation on the memorable expedition from St. Vallery, appointed as the premier of Normandy, and who had ever since assisted his royal mistress, not only with his counsels in the administration of affairs of state, but even in the education of her children,—felt it his duty to inform his sovereign of the underhand proceedings of Matilda in favour of her rebel son.[2]

William was in England when the startling intelligence reached him of the unnatural rebellion of his first-born, and the treachery of his beloved consort, in whom he had ever reposed the most unbounded confidence. He appears scarcely to have given credence to the representations of Roger de Beaumont relating to the conduct of his queen, till, on his return to Normandy, he intercepted one of Matilda's private agents, named Sampson, who was charged with communications from the queen to Robert, which left no doubt on William's mind of the identity of the secret friend by whom his undutiful son had been supplied with the means of carrying on his plots and hostile measures against his government.[1] There was a stern grandeur, not unmixed with tenderness, in the reproof which he addressed to his offending consort on this occasion. "The observation of a certain philosopher is true," said he, "and I have only too much cause to admit the force of his words,—

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[1] Malmesbury. Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] Malmesbury.

'Naufragium rerum est mulier malefida marito:'

"'The woman who deceives her husband is the destruction of her own house.' Where in all the world could you have found a companion so faithful and devoted in his affection?" continued he, passionately. "Behold my wife, she whom I have loved as my own soul, to whom I have confided the government of my realms, my treasure, and all that I possessed in the world of power and greatness,—she hath supported mine adversary against me,—she hath strengthened and enriched him from the wealth which I confided to her keeping,—she hath secretly employed her zeal and subtlety in his cause, and done every thing she could to encourage him against me!"[2]

Matilda's reply to this indignant but touching appeal, which her royal husband, more it should appear in sorrow than in anger, addressed to her, is no less remarkable for its impassioned eloquence than the subtlety with which she evades the principal point on which she is pressed, and entrenches herself on the strong ground of maternal love. "My lord," said she, "I pray you not to be surprised if I feel a mother's tenderness for my first-born son. By the virtue of the Most High, I protest that if my son Robert were dead, and hidden far from the sight of the living, seven feet deep in the earth, and that the price of my blood could restore him to life, I would cheerfully bid it flow. For his sake I would endure any suffering, yea, things from which, on any other occasion, the feebleness of my sex would shrink with terror. How, then, can you suppose that I could enjoy the pomp and luxuries with which I was surrounded, when I knew that he was pining in want and misery? Far from my heart be such hardness, nor ought your authority to impose such insensibility on a mother."[3]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

William is reported to have turned pale with anger at this rejoinder. It was not, however, on Matilda, the object of his adoring and constant affection, that he prepared to inflict the measure of vengeance which her transgression against him had provoked. Sampson, the comparatively innocent agent whom she had employed in this transaction, was doomed to pay the dreadful penalty of the offence with the loss of sight, by the order of his enraged sovereign.[1] In such cases it is usual for the instrument to be the sacrifice, and persons of the kind are generally yielded up as a sort of scapegoat, or expiatory victim. But Matilda did not abandon her terrified agent in his distress; she contrived to convey a hasty intimation of his peril, and her desire of preserving him, to some of the persons who were devoted to her service; and Sampson, more fortunate than his illustrious namesake of yore, was enabled to escape the cruel sentence of his lord by taking sanctuary in the monastery of Ouche, of which Matilda was a munificent patroness. Nevertheless, as it was a serious thing to oppose the wrath of such a prince as William, the abbot Manier found no other way of securing the trembling fugitive from his vengeance, than that of causing him to be shorn, shaven, and professed a monk of Ouche the same day he entered the convent, "in happy hour both for his body and soul," observes the contemporary chronicler who relates this circumstance.[2]

It does not appear that William's affection for Matilda suffered any material diminution in consequence of these transactions, neither would he permit any one to censure her conduct in his presence.[3] She was the love of his youth, the solace of his meridian hours of life, and she preserved her empire over his mighty heart to the last hour of her life. But though the attachment of the Conqueror to his consort remained unaltered, the happiness of the royal pair was materially impaired. Robert, their first-born, was in arms against his father and sovereign, and at the head of a numerous army,—supported by the hostile power of France on the one hand, and the disaffected portion of William's subjects on the other.

[1] Ordericus Vitalis. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

He had made a formidable attack on Rouen, and in several instances obtained successes which at first astonished his indignant parent, who had certainly greatly underrated the military talents of his heir. When, however, the Conqueror perceived that the filial foe who had thus audaciously displayed his rebel banner against him inherited the martial genius of his race, and was by no means unlikely to prove a match for himself in the art of war, he advanced with a mighty army to give him battle. The royal chiefs of Normandy met in hostile encounter on the plain of Archembraye, near the castle of Gerberg. William Rufus, the Conqueror's favourite son, was in close attendance on his father's person that day. This prince had already received the honour of knighthood from Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, his tutor, and he was eager to assist in humbling the pride of his elder brother, over whom the Conqueror anticipated a signal triumph.[1]

The battle was fought with no common fury on both sides; but Robert, who headed a choice body of cavalry, decided the fortune of the day by his impetuous charge upon the rearward of his foes, where his royal father commanded, whose utmost endeavours to preserve order in his ranks were ineffectual. It was in this charge that Robert, unconscious who the doughty champion was against whom he tilted, ran his father through the arm with his lance, and unhorsed him.[2] This was the first time that William had ever been overcome in single combat, for he was one of the strongest men and most approved knights of the age in which he lived; and it is a singular fact, that in all the battles in which he had been engaged, he had never lost a drop of blood, till it was in this field drawn by the lance of his first-born. Transported with rage at the disgrace of the overthrow, he called so loudly and angrily for rescue, that Robert recognised him, either by his voice or some of his favourite expletives, and hastily alighting, raised him from the ground in his arms with much tenderness and respect, expressed the deepest concern at the unintentional crime of which he had been guilty, for which he most humbly entreated his forgiveness, and then placing him on his own horse, he brought him safely out of the press.[1] According to some of the historians of that period, William, instead of meeting this generous burst of feeling on the part of his penitent son with answering emotions of paternal tenderness, was so infuriated at the humiliation he had received, that he uttered a malediction against him, which all the after submissions of Robert could not induce him to retract; while others, equally deserving of credit, assert that he was so moved with the proof of Robert's dutiful reverence for his person, and the anxiety he had manifested for his safety, that he presently forgave him, and ever after held him in better respect. Both accounts may be true in part; for it is very possible, that when the conqueror of England found himself defeated by his rebel subjects on his native soil, and his hitherto invincible arm overcome by the prowess of his son, (whose person he had been accustomed to mention with a contemptuous allusion to his inferiority in stature,) he might, while the smart of his wound lasted, have indulged in a strong ebullition of wrathful reproach, not unmixed with execrations, of which it appears that he, in common with all Normans of that era, had an evil habit. But after his passion was abated, it is certain that he did, in compliance with the entreaties of his queen, consent to receive the submission of his victorious but penitent son.[2]

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[1] Hoveden. S. Dunelm. M. Paris. Polydore Vergil.

[2] S. Dunelm. Malmesbury. Hoveden. M. Paris.

In this battle William Rufus was severely wounded, as well as his father, and there was a considerable slaughter of the English troops, of which the Conqueror's army was chiefly composed; for Robert had stolen the hearts of the Normans while associated in the regency with his mother Matilda, and his father considered it unsafe to oppose him with his native troops. As it was, Robert remained the master of the field, having that day given indubitable proofs of able generalship and great personal valour; but the perilous chance that had nearly rendered him the murderer of his father made so deep an impression on his mind, that he remained for a time conscience-stricken, which caused him to endeavour, by employing the intercession of his mother, to obtain a reconciliation with his offended sire.[1]

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[1] S. Dunelm. M. Paris.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis.

Matilda had suffered greatly in mind during the unnatural warfare between her husband and her first-born, especially after the frightful circumstance of their personal encounter in the field of Archembraye, which was fought in the year 1077. Some feelings of self-reproach might possibly mingle with her uneasiness on this occasion. Her health began to decline, and William was at length moved by her incessant pleading, and the sight of her tears, to write a letter with his own hand to Robert, inviting him "to repair to Rouen, and receive a full pardon for his late rebellion, promising at the same time to grant him every thing that he could expect from the affection of a father, consistently with the duty of a king." On the receipt of this welcome letter, Robert delayed not a moment to obey the summons. He came to Rouen, attended only by three servants; he was received by his parents in the most affectionate manner, and a temporary reconciliation was effected between him and his brethren.[2]

Matilda did not long enjoy the society of this beloved son; for the Conqueror's affairs in England demanding his presence, he thought proper to carry Robert with him, under the pretence that he required his services in a military capacity, to defend the northern counties against the aggression of Malcolm king of Scotland, who had once more violated the treaty of peace. William's real motive for making Robert the companion of his voyage was, because he considered Matilda was too much devoted to the interest of her first-born to render it expedient for him to remain with her in Normandy.

The year 1078[3] was remarkable in this country for the great national survey, which was instituted by the Conqueror for the purpose of ascertaining the precise nature of the lands and tangible property throughout England; so that, says Ingulphus, "there was not a hide of land, water, or waste, but he knew the valuation, the owners and possessors, together with the rents and profits thereof; as also of all cities, towns, villages, hamlets, monasteries, and religious houses; causing, also, all the people in England to be numbered, their names to be taken, with notice what any one might *dispend* by the year; their substance, money, and bondmen recorded, with their cattle, and what service they owed to him who held of him in fee: all which was certified upon the oaths of commissioners."[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] Ibid. Henderson.

[3] According to some historians, the survey was not generally begun till 1080. It was not fully completed till 1086.—Tindal's Notes on Rapin.

Such is the account given by the learned abbot of Croyland of the particulars of William's "Great Terrar," or "Domesday-book," as it was called by the Saxons. The proceedings of the commissioners were inquisitorial enough, no doubt, since they extended to ascertaining how much money every man had in his house, and what was owing to him. That in some instances, too, they were partial in their returns is evident, by the acknowledgment of Ingulphus, when, speaking of his own monastery of Croyland, he says, "The commissioners were so kind and civil, that they did not give in the true value of it:" we may therefore conclude that, whenever the proprietors made it worth their while, they were equally obliging elsewhere. Yet it was at the risk of severe punishment that any fraud, favour, connivance, or concealment was practised, by either the owners of the property or the commissioners. Robert of Gloucester, in his rhyming chronicle, gives the following quaint description of the Domesday-book:

> "Then king William, to learn the worth of his land,
> Let enquiry stretch throughout all England,
> How many plough land, and hiden also,
> Were in every shire, and what they were worth thereto;
> And the rents of each town, and the waters each one,
> The worth, and woods eke, and wastes where lived none:
> By that he wist what he were worth of all England,
> And set it clearly forth that all might understand,
> And had it clearly written, and that *script* he put, I wis,
> In the treasury of Westminster, where it still is."[2]

The description or survey of England was written in two books, the Great and Little Domesday-book;[3] and when finished, they were carefully laid up in the king's treasury or exchequer, to be consulted on occasion, or, as Polydore Vergil shrewdly observes, "when it was required to know of how much more wool the English flocks might be fleeced."

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[1] Ingulphus.

[2] See the Chapter-house, Westminster.

[3] The little book contains only Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.

Matilda, though residing chiefly in Normandy, had her distinct revenues, perquisites, and privileges as queen of England. She was allowed to claim her *aurum reginæ*, or queen-gold; that is, the tenth part of every fine voluntary that was paid to the crown.[1] She received from the city of London sums to furnish oil for her lamp, wood for her hearth, and tolls or imposts on goods landed at Queenhithe; with many other immunities, which the queen-consorts in latter days have not ventured to claim. The table at which the queen herself sat was furnished with viands at the daily expenditure of forty shillings. Twelve pence each was allowed for the sustenance of her hundred attendants.[2]

The royal revenues were never richer than in this reign, and they were not charged with any of the expenses attending on the maintenance of the military force of the country, for the king had taken care to impose that burden on such persons among his followers as had been enriched with the forfeited lands of the Anglo-Saxons. Almost every landed proprietor then held his estates on the tenure of performing crown-service, and furnishing a quota of men-at-arms at the king's need or pleasure. The principal or supreme court of judicature in ordinary was called *curia regis*, or 'king's court,' which was always at the royal residence. There councils were held, and all affairs of state transacted; there the throne was placed, and there justice was administered to the subjects by the king, as chief magistrate.[3]

We must now return to the personal history of Matilda. The latter years of this queen were spent in Normandy, where she continued to exercise the functions of government for her royal husband.[4] Ordericus Vitalis relates the particulars of a visit which she paid to the monastery of Ouche, to entreat the prayers of the abbot Manier, and his monks, in behalf of

[1] Prynne's Aurum Reginæ.

[2] The household-book of Edward IV., called the "Black Book," which cites precedents from extreme antiquity.

[3] Madox's History of the Exchequer.

[4] Ordericus Vitalis.

her second daughter, the lady Constance, the wife of Alan Fergeant, duke of Bretagne. This princess, who was passionately desirous of bringing an heir to Bretagne, was childless, and, to the grief of her mother, had fallen into a declining state of health. Matilda, in the hope of averting the apprehended death of the youthful duchess, sought the shrine of St. Eurole, the patron of the monks of Ouche, with prayers and offerings. She was most honourably received by the learned abbot Manier and his monks, who conducted her into the church. She offered a mark of gold on the altar there, and presented to the shrine of St. Eurole a costly ornament, adorned with precious stones, and she vowed many other goodly gifts in case the saint were propitious. After this the queen-duchess dined in the common refectory, behaving at the same time with the most edifying humility, so as to leave an agreeable remembrance of her visit on the minds of the brethren, of whom the worthy chronicler (who relates this circumstance to the honour and glory of his convent) was one.[1]

The visit and offerings of Matilda to the shrine of St. Eurole were unavailing to prolong the life of her daughter, for the duchess Constance died in the flower of her age, after an unfruitful marriage of seven years. Her remains were conveyed to England, and interred in the abbey of St. Edmund's Bury. Like all the children of William and Matilda she had been carefully educated, and is said to have been a princess possessed of great mental acquirements. After her death, Alan duke of Bretagne married again, and had a family by his second wife; but the rich grant of English lands, with which the Conqueror had dowered his daughter Constance, he was permitted to retain, together with the title of earl of

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis, the most eloquent of all the historians of that period, and the most minute and faithful in his personal records of the Conqueror, his queen and family, was, nevertheless, born in England, and of Anglo-Saxon parentage. He was ten years old at the epoch of the Norman invasion, when for better security he was, to use his own language, "conveyed with weeping eyes from his native country, to be educated in Normandy at the convent of Ouche," which finally became so dear to him, that all the affections of his heart appear to have been centred within its bounds. In his Chronicle of the Norman Sovereigns, he sometimes makes digressions of a hundred pages to descant on St. Eurole, and the merits of the brethren of Ouche.

Richmond, which was long borne by the dukes of Bretagne, his successors.

The grief which the early death of her daughter caused Matilda, was succeeded by feelings of a more painful nature, in consequence of a fresh difference between her royal husband and her beloved son, Robert. Some historians[1] assert that this was occasioned by the refusal of the prince to marry the young and lovely heiress of earl Waltheof, which greatly displeased his father, who was desirous of conciliating his English subjects by such an alliance, and, at the same time, of making some atonement for the murder of the unfortunate Saxon chief, which always appears to have been a painful subject of reflection to him.

About this time, Matilda, hearing that a German hermit, of great sanctity, was possessed of the gift of prophecy, sent to entreat his prayers for her jarring son and husband, and requested his opinion as to what would be the result.[2] The hermit gave a very affectionate reception to the envoys of the queen, but demanded three days before he delivered his reply to her questions. On the third day he sent for the messengers, and gave his answer in the following strain of oracular allegory. "Return to your mistress," said he, "and tell her I have prayed to God in her behalf, and the Most High has made known to me in a dream the things she desires to learn. I saw in my vision a beautiful pasture, covered with grass and flowers, and a noble charger feeding therein. A numerous herd gathered round about, eager to enter and share the feast, but the fiery charger would not permit them to approach near enough to crop the flowers and herbage. But, alas! the majestic steed, in the midst of his pride and courage, died, his terror departed with him, and a poor silly steer appeared in his place, as the guardian of the pasture. Then the throng of meaner animals, who had hitherto feared to approach, rushed in, and trampled the flowers and grass beneath their feet, and that which they could not devour they defiled and destroyed. I will explain the mystery couched in this parable. The steed is William of Normandy, the conqueror of England, who, by his wisdom, courage, and power, keeps the surrounding foes of Normandy in awe. Robert is the dull, inactive beast who will succeed him; and then those baser sort of animals, the envious princes, who have long watched for the opportunity of attacking this fair, fruitful pasture, Normandy, will overrun the land, and destroy all the prosperity which its present sovereign has established. Illustrious lady, if, after hearing the words of the vision in which the Lord has vouchsafed to reply to my prayers, you do not labour to restore the peace of Normandy, you will henceforth behold nothing but misery, the death of your royal spouse, the ruin of all your race, and the desolation of your beloved country."[1] This clever apologue, in which some sagacious advice was implied, Matilda took for a prediction; and this idea, together with the increasing dissensions in her family, pressed heavily on her mind, and is supposed to have occasioned the lingering illness which slowly, but surely, conducted her to the tomb.

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[1] Henderson, in his Life of the Conqueror, states that Robert was much taken with the beauty of the young Saxon lady, but that his regard was by no means of an honourable nature; and his conduct to her displeased the Conqueror so much, that, to punish his son for insults offered to his beautiful ward, he forbad him the court.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis.

The evidence of a charter signed by William king of England, Matildis the queen, earl Robert, son of the king, earl William, son of the king, and earl Henry, son of the king, proves that a meeting had taken place between these illustrious personages in the year 1082. The charter recites that "William, king of England and Normandy, and his wife Matildis, daughter of Baldwin duke of Flanders, and niece of Henry king of France, conceded to the church of the Holy Trinity at Caen, for the good of their souls, the manors of Nailsworth, Felstede, Pinbury, and other lands in England."[2] The restitution of the said lands to their lawful owners or their heirs, would certainly have been a more acceptable work in the sight of the God of mercy and justice, than the oblation of wrong and robbery which was thus dedicated to his service by the mighty Norman conqueror and his dying consort. Nailsworth being part of the manor of Minchinghampton, in Gloucestershire, was a portion of the spoils of the unfortunate Brihtric Meaw, which Matilda, in the last year of her life, thus transferred to the church, in the delusive idea of atoning for the crime by which she obtained the temporal goods of him who had rejected her youthful love.

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] A copy of this charter is in the Bibliothèque, Paris.

Matilda's last illness was attended with great depression of spirits. She endeavoured to obtain comfort by redoubling her devotional exercises and alms. She confessed her sins frequently, and with bitter tears. It is to be hoped that a feeling of true penitence was mingled with the affliction of the queen, who, at the highest pinnacle of earthly grandeur, afforded a melancholy exemplification of the vanity and insufficiency of the envied distinctions with which she was surrounded, and was dying of a broken heart.[1] As soon as William, who was in England, was informed of the danger of his beloved consort, he hastily embarked for Normandy, and arrived at Caen in time to receive her last farewell.[2]

After Matilda had received the consolations of religion, she expired on the 2nd of November, or, according to some historians, the 3rd of that month, anno 1083, in the fifty-second year of her age, having borne the title of queen of England seventeen years, and duchess of Normandy upwards of thirty-one. Her body was carried to the convent of the Holy Trinity at Caen, which she had built and munificently endowed. The corpse of the queen-duchess was reverentially received, at the portal of the church, by a numerous procession of bishops and abbots, conducted within the choir, and deposited before the high altar. Her obsequies were celebrated with great pomp and solemnity by the monks and clerks, and attended by a vast concourse of the poor, to whom she had been throughout life a generous benefactress, "and frequently," says Ordericus Vitalis, "relieved with bounteous alms, in the name of her Redeemer."

A magnificent tomb was raised to her memory by her sorrowing lord, adorned with precious stones and elaborate sculpture; and her epitaph, in Latin verse, was emblazoned thereon in letters of gold, setting forth in pompous language the lofty birth and noble qualities of the illustrious dead. The following is a translation of the quaint monkish rhymes, which defy the imitative powers of modern poetry:—

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] Malmesbury. Hoveden. Ingulphus. Ordericus Vitalis.

"Here rests within this fair and stately tomb,
Matilda, scion of a regal line;
The Flemish duke her sire,[1] and Adelais
Her mother, to great Robert king of France
Daughter, and sister to his royal heir.
In wedlock to our mighty William joined,
She built this holy temple, and endowed
With lands and goodly gifts. She, the true friend
Of piety and soother of distress,
Enriching others, indigent herself,
Reserving all her treasures for the poor;
And, by such deeds as these, she merited
To be partaker of eternal life:
To which she pass'd November 2, 1083."

Matilda's will, which is in the register of the abbey of the Holy Trinity of Caen,[2] fully bears out the assertion of her epitaph, touching her poverty; since, from the items in this curious and interesting record, it is plain that the first of our Anglo-Norman queens had little to leave in the way of personal property: the bulk of her landed possessions was already settled on her son Henry. "I give," says the royal testatrix, "to the abbey of the Holy Trinity my tunic, worked at Winchester by Alderet's wife; and the mantle embroidered with gold, which is in my chamber, to make a cope. Of my two golden girdles, I give that which is ornamented with emblems, for the purpose of suspending the lamp before the great altar. I give my large candelabra, made at St. Lo, my crown, my sceptre, my cups in their cases, another cup made in England, with all my horse-trappings, and all my vessels; and lastly, I give the lands of Quetchou and Cotentin, except those which I may already have disposed of in my lifetime, with two dwellings in England; and I have made all these bequests with the consent of my husband."

It is amusing to trace the feminine feeling with regard to dress and *bijouterie* which has led the dying queen to enumerate, in her last will and testament, her embroidered tunic, girdle, and mantle, with sundry other personal decorations, before she mentions the lands of Quetchou and Cotentin, and her two dwellings in England,—objects evidently of far less importance, in her opinion, than her rich array. Ducarel tells us, that among the records preserved in the archives of the Holy Trinity at Caen, there is a curious MS. containing an account of Matilda the royal foundress's wardrobe, jewels, and toilette; but he was unable to obtain a sight of this precious document, because of the jealous care with which it was guarded by those holy ladies, the abbess and nuns of that convent.[1]

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[1] Baldwin, Matilda's father, was the descendant of 'the six foresters,' as the first sovereigns of Flanders were called.

[2] Ducarel's Norman Antiquities.

Matilda did not live long enough to complete her embroidered chronicle of the conquest of England. The outline of the pattern traced on the bare canvas in several places, in readiness for her patient needle, affords, after the lapse of nearly eight centuries, a moral comment on the uncertainty of human life,—the vanity of human undertakings, which, in the aggregate, are arrested in full career by the hand of death, and remain, like the Bayeux tapestry, unfinished fragments.

Till the middle of the seventeenth century, the portraits of Matilda and William were carefully preserved on the walls of St. Stephen's chapel at Caen. The queen had caused these portraits to be painted when this magnificent endowment was founded.[2] We have seen, by the Bayeux tapestry, that Matilda took great delight in pictorial memorials; and if we may judge by the engraving from this portrait, preserved in Montfaucon, it were a pity that so much grace and beauty should fade from the earth without remembrance. Her costume is singularly dignified and becoming. The robe simply gathered round the throat, a flowing veil falling from the back of the head on the shoulders, is confined by an elegant circlet of gems. The face is beautiful and delicate; the hair falls in waving tresses round her throat; with one hand she confines her drapery, and holds a book; she extends her sceptre with the other, in an attitude full of grace and dignity. Montfaucon declares that this painting was actually copied from the wall, before the room in which it was preserved was pulled down. The elegance of the design and costume ought not to raise doubts of its authenticity, for it is well known that all remains of art were much better executed before the destruction of Constantinople than after that period. Female costume, with the exception of some tasteless attire which crept into the uproarious court of William Rufus, was extremely graceful; the noble circlet, the flowing transparent veil, the natural curls parted on each side of the brow, the vestal stole, drawn just round the neck in regular folds, the falling sleeves, the gemmed zone, confining the plaits of a garment that swept the ground in rich fulness, altogether formed a costume which would not have disgraced a Grecian statue. We shall see this elegant style of dress superseded in time by the monstrous Syrian conical caps, or by horned head-tire, and the heraldic tabards and surcoats, seemingly made of patchwork, which deformed the female figure in succeeding ages; but we must not look for these barbarisms at the date of Matilda's portrait.

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[1] Ducarel's Norman Antiquities.

[2] Montfaucon's Monumens de la Monarchie Françoise.

Matilda bore ten children to her royal spouse; namely, four sons and six daughters. Robert, surnamed Courthose, her eldest son, succeeded his father as duke of Normandy. This darling son of Matilda's heart is thus described in the old chronicler's lines:—

> "He was y-wox [grown] ere his fader to England came,
> Thick man he was enow, but not well long;
> Square was he, and well made for to be strong.
> Before his fader, once on a time he did sturdy deed,
> When he was young, who beheld him, and these words said:
> 'By the uprising of God, Robelyn me sall see,
> The Courthose, my young son, a stalwart knight sall be;'—
> For he was somewhat short, so he named him Courthose,
> And he might never after this name lose.
> He was quiet of counsel and speech, and of body strong,
> Never yet man of might in Christendom, ne in Paynim,
> In battail from his steed could bring him down."

After the death of Matilda, Robert broke out into open revolt against his royal father once more; and the Conqueror, in his famous death-bed speech and confession, alluded to this conduct with great bitterness, when he spake of the disposition of his dominions. These were the words of the dying monarch: "The dukedom of Normandy, before I fought in the vale Sanguelac, with Harold, I granted unto my son Robert, for that he is my first begotten; and having received the homage of his baronage, that honour given cannot be revoked. Yet I know that it will be a miserable reign which is subject to the rule of his government, for he is a foolish, proud knave, and is to be punished with cruel fortune."[1] Robert acquired the additional cognomen of the Unready, from the circumstance of being always out of the way when the golden opportunity of improving his fortunes occurred.

Robert, though an indifferent politician, was a gallant knight and a skilful general. He joined the crusade under Godfrey of Boulogne, and so greatly distinguished himself at the taking of the holy city, that of all the Christian princes, his fellow-crusaders, he was judged most deserving of the crown of Jerusalem. This election was made on the Easter-eve as they all stood at the high altar in the temple, each holding an unlighted wax-taper in his hand, and beseeching God to direct their choice; when the taper which duke Robert held becoming ignited without any visible agency, it was regarded by the rest of the Croises as a miraculous intimation in his favour, and he was entreated to accept the kingdom,[2] but he declined it, under the idea that he should obtain the crown of England.

Richard, the second son of William the Conqueror and Matilda, died in England in the lifetime of his parents, as we have already stated. William, their third son, surnamed Rufus, or Rous,[3] from the colour of his hair, and called by the Saxon historians 'the red king,' succeeded to the crown of England after his father's death. Henry, the fourth and youngest son of William and Matilda, won the surname of Beauclerc by his scholastic attainments, and succeeded to the throne of England after the death of William Rufus.

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[1] See death-bed speech of the Conqueror, in Speed's Chronicle.

[2] Matthew Paris.

[3] "Après William Bastardus regna Will. le Rous."—Fitz-Stephen's Chronicle.

The personal history of this prince will be found in the memoirs of his two queens, Matilda of Scotland, and Adelicia of Louvaine.

There is great confusion among historians and genealogists respecting the names of the daughters of Matilda and the Conqueror, and the order of their birth. William of Malmesbury, who wrote in the reign of Henry I., when enumerating the daughters of the Conqueror, says, "Cecilia the abbess of Caen still survives." The generality of historians mention Constance, the wife of Alan duke of Bretagne, as the second daughter of this illustrious pair. Ordericus Vitalis, a contemporary, calls her the third,[1] and Agatha the second daughter. Of Agatha he relates the following interesting particulars: "This princess, who had been formerly affianced to Harold, was demanded of her father in marriage by Alphonso king of Galicia, but manifested the greatest repugnance to this alliance." She told her father "that her heart was devoted to her first spouse, and that she should consider it an abomination if she gave her hand to another. She had seen and loved her Saxon betrothed, and she revolted from a union with the foreign monarch whom she had never seen;" and bursting into tears, she added, with passionate emotion, "that she prayed that the Most High would rather take her to himself, than allow her ever to be transported into Spain." Her prayer was granted, and the reluctant bride died on her journey to her unknown lord. Her remains were conveyed to her native land, and interred at Bayeux, in the church of St. Mary the perpetual Virgin.[2]

Sandford calls this princess the sixth daughter. If so, she could not have been the betrothed of Harold, but of earl Edwin; and, indeed, if we reflect on the great disparity in age between Harold and the younger daughters of William of Normandy, and take into consideration the circumstances of his breach of contract with the little Norman lady by wedding Algitha, it is scarcely probable that his memory could have been cherished with the passionate fondness Ordericus Vitalis attributes to the lady Agatha; whereas Edwin was young, and, remarkable for his beauty, had, in all probability, been privileged with some intimacy with the princess, whom the Conqueror had promised to bestow on him in marriage. The breach of this promise on the part of William, too, was the cause of Edwin's revolt, which implies that the youthful thane was deeply wounded at the refusal of the Norman; and it is at least probable, that to the princess who had innocently been made a snare to him by her guileful sire, he might have become an object of the tenderest affection. Malmesbury, speaking of this princess, says, "Agatha, to whom God granted a virgin death, was so devoted to the exercises of religion, that after her decease it was discovered that her knees had become hard, like horn, with constant kneeling."[1] Perhaps this is the same princess whom Ordericus Vitalis mentions as their fourth daughter, of whom he says, "Adelaide, very fair and very noble, recommended herself entirely to a life of devotion, and made a holy end, under the direction of Roger de Beaumont."

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. William of Malmesbury.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis.

Adela, or Adelicia, generally classed as the fourth daughter of William and Matilda, Ordericus Vitalis places as the fifth, and says, "She was sought in marriage by Stephen earl of Blois, who was desirous of allying himself with the aspiring family of the Conqueror, and by the advice of William's councillors she was united to him. The marriage took place at Breteuil, and the marriage fêtes were celebrated at Chartres. This princess was a learned woman, and possessed of considerable diplomatic talents. She had four sons; William, an idiot; Thibaut, surnamed the great earl of Champagne; Stephen de Blois, who succeeded to the English throne after the death of Henry I.; and Henry bishop of Winchester. After the death of the count de Blois, her husband, the countess Adela took the veil at Marigney.[2]

Gundred, or Gundreda, the sixth and youngest daughter of the Conqueror and Matilda, was married to William de Warren, a powerful Norman noble, and the first earl of Surrey in England. By him the lady Gundred had two sons;

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. Malmesbury.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis.

William, the successor of his father and the progenitor of a mighty line of earls of that family, and Rainold, who died without issue. Gundred only survived her royal mother two years. She died, anno 1085, in child-bed at Castleacre in Norfolk, and is buried in the chapter-house of St. Pancras church, within the priory, at Lewes in Sussex.[1]

The death of his beloved queen Matilda afflicted the Conqueror very deeply. He wept excessively for many days after her decease; and to testify how keenly he felt her loss, he renounced his favourite amusement of hunting, and all the boisterous sports in which he formerly delighted.[2] After this event his temper became melancholy and irritable, to which, indeed, a train of public calamities and domestic vexations might in a great measure have contributed. To the honour of Matilda, it has been asserted by some of the historians of the period, that she used her influence over the mind of her mighty lord for the mitigation of the sufferings of the people whom he had subjugated to his yoke. Thomas Rudborne, the author of the Annals of Winton, says, "King William, by the advice of Matilda, treated the English kindly as long as she lived, but after her death he became a thorough tyrant."[1] It is certainly true, that after Matilda left England in 1070, the condition of the people became infinitely worse, and it is possible that it might have been aggravated by her death. Not only the happiness, but the worldly prosperity of William appeared sensibly diminished during his widowed state. In the course of the four years that he survived his consort, he experienced nothing but trouble and disquiet.[2]

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[1] Sandford. St. Pancras church and monastery had been founded and munificently endowed by her lord, for the health (as his charter recites) of his soul, and the soul of Gundred his wife, and for the soul of king William, who brought him into England . . . . . for the health also of queen Maud, mother of his wife, and for the health of king William her son, who made him earl of Surrey.—Horsfield's Hist. of the Antiquities of Sussex, p. 232. Warren, though one of the most ferocious and rapacious of William's followers, was tenderly attached to his wife, whom he scarcely survived three years. The remains of both were discovered, October 28th, 1845, by the workmen in forming a cutting for the Lewes and Brighton rail-road through the grounds of St. Pancras priory, in two leaden coffins, with the simple inscription of GUNDRADA on the one, and WILHELMUS on the other. They are now deposited in Southover church, together with a tablet, previously discovered, which preserves part of the mutilated monastic verses that commemorated her virtues. They have been thus beautifully translated into modern English rhymes by the learned historian of Lewes:—

"Gundred, illustrious branch of princely race,
Brought into England's church balsamic grace;
Pious as Mary, and as Martha kind,
To generous deeds she gave her virtuous mind.
Though the cold tomb her Martha's part receives,
Her Mary's better part for ever lives.
O holy Pancras! keep, with gracious care,
A mother who has made thy sons her heir.
On the sixth calend of June's fatal morn,
The marble . . . . . ."

One of the most remarkable tokens of the interest excited by the discovery of these remains of the youngest daughter of the Conqueror and queen Matilda may be considered the fact, that an eloquent sermon was preached by the rev. J. Wood, to a Unitarian congregation at Westgate, on the occasion.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis.

William met with the accident which caused his death, at the storming of the city of Mantes. He had roused himself from a sick bed to execute a terrible vengeance on the French border, for the ribald joke which his old antagonist, the king of France, had passed on his malady; and in pursuance of his declaration "that he would set all France in a blaze at his uprising," he had ordered the city to be fired. While he was, with savage fury, encouraging his soldiers to pursue the work of destruction to which he had incited them, his horse, chancing to set his foot on a piece of burning timber, started, and occasioned his lord so severe an injury from the pummel of the saddle, as to bring on a violent access of fever.[3] Being unable to remount his horse, after an accident which must have appeared to him like a retributive chastisement for the barbarous deed in which he was engaged, he was conveyed in a litter to Rouen, where, perceiving he drew near his end, he began to experience some compunctious visitings of conscience for the crimes and oppressions of which he had been guilty, and endeavoured to make some self-deceiving reparation for his wrongs.

In the first place, he ordered large sums to be distributed to the poor, and likewise for the building of churches, especially those which he had recently burnt at Mantes; next he set all the Saxon prisoners at liberty whom he had detained in his Norman prisons; among them were Morcar, and Ulnoth the brother of Harold, who had remained in captivity from his childhood, when he was given in hostage by earl Godwin to Edward the Confessor. The heart of the dying monarch being deeply touched with remorse, he confessed that he had done Morcar much wrong: he bitterly bewailed the blood he had shed in England, and the desolation and woe he had caused in Hampshire for the sake of planting the New Forest, protesting "that having so misused that fair and beautiful land, he dared not appoint a successor to it, but left the disposal of that matter in the hands of God."[1] He had, however, taken some pains, by writing a letter to Lanfranc expressive of his earnest wish that William Rufus should succeed him in his regal dignity, and to secure the crown of England to this his favourite son,—for whom he called as soon as he had concluded his death-bed confessions,—and sealing the letter with his own seal, he put it into the hands of the prince, bidding him hasten to England with all speed, and deliver it to the archbishop, blessed him with a farewell kiss, and dismissed him.

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[1] Thomas Rudborne, Hist. Major.

[2] Malmesbury. Ordericus Vitalis.

[3] Malmesbury. Higden.

When the Conqueror had settled his temporal affairs, he caused himself to be removed to Hermentrude, a pleasant village near Rouen,[2] that he might be more at liberty to prepare himself for death. On the 9th of September the awful change which he awaited took place. Hearing the sound of the great bell in the metropolitan church of St. Gervase, near Rouen, William, raising his exhausted frame from the supporting pillows, asked "What it meant?"[3] One of his attendants replying "that it then rang prime to Our Lady," the dying monarch, lifting his eyes to heaven, and spreading abroad his hands, exclaimed, "I commend myself to that blessed lady, Mary the mother of God, that she by her holy intercession may reconcile me to her most dear son, our Lord Jesus Christ;" and with these words he expired, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, 1087, after a reign of fifty-two years in Normandy, and twenty-one in England.

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[1] See William's death-bed confession in Speed.

[2] Eadmer.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis. Malmesbury.

His eldest son, Robert, was absent in Germany at the time of his death;[1] William was on his voyage to England; Henry, who had taken charge of his obsequies, suddenly departed on some self-interested business; and all the great officers of the court having dispersed themselves, some to offer their homage to Robert, and others to William, the inferior servants of the household, with some of their rapacious confederates, took the opportunity of plundering the house where their sovereign had just breathed his last of all the money, plate, wearing apparel, hangings, and precious furniture; they even stripped the person of the royal dead, and left his body naked upon the floor.[2]

Every one appeared struck with consternation and dismay, and neither the proper officers of state nor the sons of the deceased king issuing the necessary orders respecting the funeral, the remains of the Conqueror were left wholly neglected, till Herlewin, a poor country knight,—but in all probability the same Herlewin who married his mother Arlotta,—undertook to convey the royal corpse to Caen, at his own cost, for interment in the abbey of St. Stephen, where it was met by prince Henry and a procession of monks.[3] Scarcely, however, had the burial rites commenced, when there was a terrible alarm of fire in that quarter of the town; and as there was great danger of the devouring element communicating to the cloisters of St. Stephen, the monks, who were far more concerned for the preservation of their stately abbey than for the lifeless remains of the munificent founder, scampered out of the church, without the slightest regard to decency or the remonstrances of prince Henry and the faithful Herlewin. The example of the ecclesiastics was followed by the secular attendants, so that the hearse of the mighty William was in a manner wholly deserted till the conflagration was suppressed.[4] The monks then re-entered the holy fane and proceeded with the solemnity, if so it might be called; but the interruptions and accidents with which it had been marked were not yet ended, for when the funeral sermon was finished, the stone coffin set in the grave which had been dug in the chancel between the choir and the altar, and the body ready to be laid therein,[1] Anselm Fitz-Arthur, a Norman gentleman, stood forth and forbad the interment: "This spot," said he, "was the site of my father's house, which this dead duke took violently from him, and here, upon part of mine inheritance, founded this church. This ground I therefore challenge, and I charge ye all, as ye shall answer it at the great and dreadful day of judgment, that ye lay not the bones of the despoiler on the hearth of my fathers."[2]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. Brompton.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis. Brompton. Malmesbury. Speed.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

The effect of this bold appeal of a solitary individual, was an instant pause in the burial rite of the deceased sovereign. The claims of Anselm Fitz-Arthur were examined and his rights recognised by prince Henry, who prevailed upon him to accept sixty shillings as the price of the grave, and to suffer the interment of his royal father to proceed, on the condition of his pledging himself to pay the full value of the rest of the land.[3] The compensation was stipulated between Anselm Fitz-Arthur and prince Henry, standing on either side the grave, on the verge of which the unburied remains of the Conqueror rested, while the agreement was ratified in the presence of the mourners and assistant priests and monks, whereby Henry promised to pay, and Fitz-Arthur to receive, one hundred pounds of silver, as the purchase of the ground on which William had, thirty-five years previously, wrongfully founded the abbey of St. Stephen's, to purchase a dispensation from the pope for his marriage with his cousin Matilda of Flanders. The bargain having been struck, and the payment of the sixty shillings earnest-money (for the occupation of the seven feet of earth required as the last abode of the conqueror of England) being tendered by the prince and received by Fitz-Arthur,—strange interlude as it was in a royal funeral,—the obsequies were suffered to proceed. The Saxon chroniclers have taken evident pleasure in enlarging on all the mischances and humiliations which befell the unconscious clay of their great national adversary in its passage to the tomb; yet, surely, so singular a chapter of accidents was never yet recorded as occurred to the corpse of this mighty sovereign, who died in the plenitude of his power.

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[1] Speed.

[2] Eadmer. Malmesbury. Ordericus Vitalis.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis. M. Paris.

William of Normandy was remarkable for his personal strength, and for the majestic beauty of his countenance. It has been said of him, that no one but himself could bend his bow, and that he could, when riding at full speed, discharge either arblast or long-bow with unerring aim.[1] His forehead was high and bald, his aspect stern and commanding; yet he could, when it pleased him to do so, assume such winning sweetness in his looks and manner as could scarcely be resisted; but when in anger, no man could meet the terror of his eye.[2] Like Saul, he was, from the shoulders upwards, taller than the rest of his subjects; before he became too corpulent, his figure was finely proportioned.

The loftiness of stature which contemporary chroniclers have ascribed to William the Conqueror was fully confirmed by the *post mortem* examination of his body, which was made by the bishop of Bayeux in the year 1542, when, prompted by a strong desire to behold the remains of this great sovereign, he obtained leave to open his tomb.[3] On removing the stone cover, the body, which was corpulent, and exceeding in stature the tallest man then known, appeared as entire as when it was first buried. Within the tomb lay a plate of copper gilt, on which was engraved an inscription in Latin verse.[4]

The bishop, who was greatly surprised at finding the body in such perfect preservation, caused a painting to be executed of the royal remains, in the state in which they then appeared, by the best artist in Caen, and caused it to be hung up on the abbey wall, opposite to the monument. The tomb was then carefully closed, but in 1562, when the Calvinists under Chastillon took Caen, a party of the rapacious soldiers forced it open, in hope of meeting with a treasure; but finding nothing more than the bones of the Conqueror wrapped in red taffeta, they threw them about the church in great derision. Viscount Falaise, having obtained from the rioters one of the thigh-bones, it was by him deposited in the royal grave. Monsieur le Bras, who saw this bone, testified that it was longer by the breadth of his four fingers than that of the tallest man he had ever seen.[1] The fanatic spoilers also entered the church of the Holy Trinity, threatening the same violence to the remains of Matilda. The entreaties and tears of the abbess and her nuns had no effect on men, who considered the destruction of church ornaments and monumental sculpture a service to God quite sufficient to atone for the sacrilegious violence of defacing a temple consecrated to his worship, and rifling the sepulchres of the dead. They threw down the monument, and broke the effigies of the queen which lay thereon. On opening the grave in which the royal corpse was deposited, one of the party observing that there was a gold ring set with a fine sapphire on one of the queen's fingers, took it off, and, with more gallantry than might have been expected from such a person, presented it to the abbess, madame Anna de Montmorenci, who afterwards gave it to her father, the constable of France, when he attended Charles IX. to Caen, in the year 1563.[2]

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[1] Robert of Gloucester. W. Malmesbury.

[2] W. Malmesbury.

[3] Ducarel's Norman Antiquities.

[4] Thomas, archbishop of York, was the author of the Latin verse, of which the following lines present a close translation, not unpoetical in its antique simplicity:

"He who the sturdy Normans ruled, and over England reigned,
And stoutly won and strongly kept what he had so obtained;
And did the swords of those of Maine by force bring under awe,
And made them under his command live subject to his law;
This great king William lieth here entombed in little grave,—
So great a lord so small a house sufficeth him to have.
When Phœbus in the Virgin's lap his circled course applied,
And twenty-three degrees had past, e'en at that time he died"

In 1642 the monks of St. Stephen collected the bones of their royal patron, William of Normandy, and built a plain altar-shaped tomb over them, on the spot where the original monument stood in the chancel. The nuns of the Holy Trinity, with equal zeal, caused the broken fragments of

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[1] The picture of the remains, which had been painted by the order of the bishop of Bayeux, fell into the hands of Peter Ildo, the gaoler of Caen, who was one of the spoilers, and he converted one part into a table, and the other into a cupboard door; which proves that this portrait was not painted on canvas, but, as usual, on wood. Some years after, these curious relics were discovered and reclaimed by M. le Bras, in whose possession they remained till his death.—Ducarel's Norman Antiquities.

[2] Ducarel.

Matilda's statue and monument to be restored, and placed over her grave, near the middle of the choir, on a tomb of black and white marble, three feet high and six long, in the shape of a coffin, surrounded with iron spikes, and hung with ancient tapestry.[1]

The restored monument of Matilda remained undisturbed till nearly the close of the last century, when the French republicans paid one of their destructive visits to the church of the Holy Trinity at Caen, and, among other outrages against taste and feeling, swept away this memorial of its royal foundress;[2] but while a single arch of that majestic and time-honoured fane, the church of the Holy Trinity, survives, the first of our Anglo-Norman queens, Matilda of Flanders, will require no other monument.

[1] Ducarel.

[2] Ibid.

MATILDA OF SCOTLAND,

QUEEN OF HENRY I.

CHAPTER I.

Ancestry of Matilda—Direct descent from Alfred—Margaret Atheling her mother—Marries the king of Scotland—Matilda's birth—Her godfather—Education—First suitor—Her father invades England—His death—Her mother's grief—Pious death—Revolution in Scotland—Edgar Atheling carries the royal family to England—Princesses Matilda and Mary—Placed in Romsey abbey—Their aunt, abbess Christina—Matilda's brother Edgar—Restored to the throne of Scotland—The Atheling a crusader—Matilda at Wilton-abbey—Her literary education—Attachment between Matilda and Henry Beauclerc—Her other suitors—Early life of Henry—Education at Cambridge—Surname—Literary work by him—Legacy at the Conqueror's death—Poverty of Henry—Affronted by Matilda's suitor, earl Warren—Courtship of Matilda—Harsh rule of lady Christina—Henry seizes the English throne—Asks Matilda's hand—Opposition of her aunt—Council of the church—Matilda's evidence—Her scruples—Importuned by Anglo-Saxons—Consents—Address to her by Anselm—Consent of the people—Her marriage and coronation—Saxon laws restored.

When we consider the perils to which the representatives of our ancient line of sovereigns, Edgar Atheling and his sisters, were exposed during the usurpation of Harold and the Norman reigns of terror, it almost appears as if an overruling Providence had guarded these descendants of the great Alfred, for the purpose of continuing the lineage of that patriot king on the throne of these realms, through the marriage of Henry I. with the daughter of Margaret Atheling, Matilda of Scotland. This princess, the subject of our present biography, is distinguished among the many illustrious females that have worn the crown-matrimonial of England by the title of 'the good queen;' a title which, eloquent in its simplicity, briefly implies

[illegible]

that she possessed not only the great and shining qualities calculated to add lustre to a throne, but that she employed them in promoting the happiness of all classes of her subjects, affording at the same time a bright example of the lovely and endearing attributes which should adorn the female character.

Some historians call this princess Matilda Atheling, and by these she is almost invested with the dignity of a queen-regnant, as the heiress of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs. In the same spirit, her grandson and representative, Henry II., is designated 'the restorer of the English royal line.' This is, however, as Blackstone justly observes, "a great error, for the rights of Margaret Atheling to the English succession were vested in her sons, and not in her daughter."[1] James I., on his accession to the throne of England, failed not to set forth that important leaf in his pedigree, and laid due stress on the circumstance of his descent from the ancient line of English sovereigns by the elder blood. Alexander, the archdeacon of Salisbury, (who wrote the Tracts of the Exchequer, quoted by Gervase of Tilbury in his celebrated Dialogues of the Exchequer,) has gravely set forth, in his red-book, a pedigree of Matilda of Scotland, tracing her descent in an unbroken line up to Adam. There is a strange medley of Christian kings and pagan sinners, such as Woden and Balder, with the Jewish patriarchs of holy writ, in this royal genealogy.[2]

Matilda is the only princess of Scotland who ever shared the throne of a king of England. It is, however, from her maternal ancestry that she derives her great interest as connected with the annals of this country. Her mother, Margaret Atheling, was the grand-daughter of Edmund Ironside, and the daughter of Edward Atheling, surnamed the Outlaw, by a German princess, erroneously stated by English historians to have been Agatha, daughter of the emperor Henry II. of Germany.[3] Her brother, Edgar Atheling, so often mentioned in the preceding biography, feeling some reason to mistrust the apparent friendship of William the Conqueror, privately withdrew from his court, and in the year 1068, (the same year in which Henry I. was born,) took shipping with Margaret, and their younger sister Christina and their mother, intending to seek a refuge in Hungary with their royal kindred; but, by stress of weather, the vessel in which they, with many other English exiles, were embarked, was driven into the Frith of Forth. Malcolm Canmore, the young unmarried king of Scotland, who had just regained his dominions from the usurper Macbeth, happened to be present when the royal fugitives landed, and was so struck with the beauty of the lady Margaret Atheling, that in a few days he asked her in marriage of her brother. Edgar joyfully gave the hand of the dowerless princess to the young and handsome sovereign, who had received the exiled English in the most generous and honourable manner, and whose disinterested affection was sufficient testimony of the nobleness of his disposition. The spot where Margaret first set her foot on the Scottish land was, in memory of that circumstance, called Queen's-Ferry, the name it bears to this day.

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[1] Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. i.

[2] Lib. Rud. fol. notata 4.

[3] The most authentic account of the maternal pedigree of Margaret Atheling will be found in Drummond's Noble Families of England and Scotland,—article, *Bruce.*

The Saxon chronicler, of whom this lady is an especial favourite, indulges in a most edifying homily on the providence which led the holy Margaret to become the spouse of the king of Scotland, who is evidently regarded by the cowled historian as little better than a pagan. Certain it is that the mighty son of 'the gracious Duncan' could neither read nor write. After her marriage, the Saxon princess became the happy instrument of diffusing the blessings of Christianity throughout her husband's dominions, commencing the work of conversion in the proper place,—her own household and the court. The influence which her personal charms had in the first instance won over the heart of her royal husband, her virtues and mental powers increased and retained to the last hour of Malcolm's existence. He reposed the most unbounded confidence, not only in the principles, but the judgment of his English consort, who became the domestic legislator of the realm. She dismissed from the palace all persons who were convicted of leading immoral lives, or who were guilty of fraud or injustice, and allowed no persons to hold offices in the royal household unless they conducted themselves in a sober and discreet manner; observing, moreover, that the Scotch nobles had an irreverent habit of rising from table before grace could be pronounced by her pious chaplain Turgot, she rewarded those of the more civilized chiefs who could be induced to attend the performance of that edifying ceremony, with a cup of the choicest wine. The temptation of such a bribe was too powerful to be resisted by the hitherto perverse and *graceless* peers, and by degrees the custom became so popular, that every guest was eager to claim his 'grace-cup;' the fashion spread from the palace to the castles of the nobility, and thence descending to the dwellings of their humbler neighbours, became an established usage in the land.

Many deeply interesting, as well as amusing particulars, connected with the parents of Matilda of Scotland, the subject of our present memoir, have been preserved by the learned Turgot, the historian of this royal family, who, in his capacity of confessor to queen Margaret, and preceptor to her children,[1] enjoyed opportunities of becoming acquainted not only with all personal particulars respecting these illustrious individuals, but of learning their most private thoughts and feelings. Turgot gives great commendation to his royal mistress, for the conscientious care she bestowed on the education of her children, whose preceptors she enjoined to punish them as often as their faults required correction.

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[1] Turgot was a Saxon of good family, born in Lincolnshire. He was delivered as a hostage to William the Conqueror, and shut up by him in Lincoln-castle. From thence he escaped to Norway. Returning from that country, he was shipwrecked on the English coast, and having lost every thing he possessed in the world, he became a priest, and distinguished himself so much by his learning and piety, that he was promoted to be prior of Durham. When Margaret Atheling became queen of Scotland, she preferred him to the office of her confessor. He followed the fortunes of his royal pupil Matilda, the daughter of his illustrious patroness, after her marriage with Henry I.; and we find that the English monarch, who possibly wished to remove him from the queen, in 1107 warmly recommended him to his royal brother-in-law, Edgar of Scotland, as a fit person to be appointed to the bishopric of St. Andrew's. Turgot, however, died prior of Durham. He is said to have been the author of the chronicle of Durham which goes by the name of "Simeon of Durham," and has been appropriated by a contemporary monk of that name. Turgot's Chronicle of the lives of his royal mistress Margaret Atheling, and her consort Malcolm Canmore, king of Scotland, has been preserved by Fordun, and is frequently cited by sir David Dalrymple.—Nicholson. Henry.

Matilda, the subject of this memoir, was her eldest daughter, and was probably born in the year 1079. This we infer from the remarkable circumstance, of the elder brother of her future husband, Robert Courthose, being her godfather.[1] Malcolm Canmore, her father, invaded England in that year, and Robert of Normandy was, on his reconciliation with his father, William the Conqueror, sent with a military force to repel this northern attack. Robert, finding his forces inadequate to maintain successfully a war of aggression, entered into a negotiation with the Scottish monarch, which ended in a friendly treaty. Malcolm renewed his homage for Cumberland; and Robert, who, whatever his faults might be as a private character, was one of the most courteous knights and polished gentlemen of the age in which he lived, finally cemented the auspicious amity which he had established between his royal sire and the warlike husband of the heiress presumptive of the Saxon line of kings, by becoming the sponsor of the infant princess Matilda. Some historians assert that the name of the little princess was originally Editha, and that it was, out of compliment to the Norman prince her godfather, changed to Matilda, the name of his beloved mother; the contemporary chronicler, Ordericus Vitalis, says, *Matildem, quæ prius dicta est Editha:* 'Matilda, whose first name was Edith.'[2]

Matilda the Good received her earliest lessons of virtue and piety from her illustrious mother, and of learning from the worthy Turgot, the preceptor of the royal children of Scotland. While Matilda was very young, there appears to have been an attempt on the part, either of the queen her mother, or her aunt Christina Atheling, the celebrated abbess of Romsey, to consecrate her to the church, or at least to give her tender mind a conventual bias, greatly to the displeasure of the king her father; who once, as Matilda herself testified, when she was brought into his presence dressed in a nun's veil, snatched it from her head in a great passion, and indignantly tore it in pieces, observing at the same time to Alan duke of Bretagne, who stood by, "that he intended to bestow her in marriage, and not to devote her to a cloister."[1] This circumstance, young as she was, appears to have made a very deep impression on the mind of the little princess, and probably assisted in strengthening her determination, in after years, never to complete the profession of which she was, at one period of her life, compelled to assume the semblance. Alan duke of Bretagne, to whom king Malcolm addressed this observation, was the widower of William the Conqueror's daughter Constance; and though there was a great disparity of years between him and Matilda, it appears certain that the object of his visit to the Scottish court was to obtain her for his second wife;[2] and that was one of the unsuitable matches to which we shall find that Matilda afterwards alluded.

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[1] Sir J. Hayward. William of Malmesbury.

[2] See Dr. Lingard's learned note, p. 126, vol. ii. ed. 4.

Matilda's uncle, Edgar Atheling, became resident at the court of her father and mother for some time, in the year 1091; and it is a remarkable fact, that William Rufus and Malcolm joined in appointing him as arbiter of peace between England and Scotland, which were then engaged in a furious and devastating war.[3] Thus placed in the most singular and romantic position that ever was sustained by a disinherited heir, Edgar conducted himself with such zeal and impartiality as to give satisfaction to both parties, and a pacification was concluded, which afforded a breathing time of two years to the harassed people of this island. After a reconciliation with William Rufus, which was never afterwards broken by the most trying circumstances, Edgar returned to the court of his favourite friend and companion, Robert of Normandy. The dangerous illness of William Rufus, at Gloucester, tempted king Malcolm Canmore to invade his dominions, in the year 1093, for the purpose, as he said, of revenging the insults he had received from the Anglo-Norman sovereign; his real object was, probably, to take advantage of Rufus's unpopularity with all classes, and to assert the rival title of the descendants of the great Alfred, with whom he was now so closely united. According to Hector Boethius and Buchanan, Malcolm was killed at the siege of Alnwick-castle, by the treachery of the besieged, who, being reduced to the last extremity, offered to surrender, if the Scottish king would receive the keys in person. Malcolm of course acceded to this condition,[1] and coming to the gates, was there met by a knight bearing the keys on the point of a lance, which he offered to the king on his knee; but when Malcolm stooped to receive them, he treacherously thrust the point of the lance through the bars of his vizor into his eye, and gave him a mortal wound.

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[1] Eadmer.

[2] Eadmer. Gem.

[3] Brompton. Hoveden. Y-Podigma of Neustria.

This was heavy news to pour into the anxious ear of the widowed queen, who then lay on her death-bed, attended by her daughters Matilda and Mary. The particulars of this sad scene are thus related by an eye-witness, the faithful Turgot. During a short interval of ease, queen Margaret devoutly received the communion. Soon after, her anguish of body returned with redoubled violence; she stretched herself on the couch, and calmly awaited the moment of her dissolution. Cold, and in the agonies of death, she ceased not to put up her supplications to Heaven in the touching words of the *Miserere*: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; blot out mine iniquities; make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."[2]

At that moment her young son, prince Edgar, returned from the disastrous English expedition, and approached her couch. "How fares it with the king and my Edward?" asked the dying queen. The youthful prince stood mournfully silent. "I know all—I know all," cried his mother; "yet, by this holy cross I adjure you speak out the worst." As she spoke she presented to the view of her son that celebrated 'black cross' which she had brought with her from England, as the most precious possession she derived from her royal Saxon ancestors.[3]

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[1] Malmesbury.

[2] Turgot.

[3] Carruthers' History of Scotland, vol. i. pp. 312-353. The English viewed the possession of this jewel by the royal family of Scotland with great displeasure:

"Your husband and eldest son are both slain," replied the prince. Lifting her eyes and hands towards heaven, she said. "Praise and blessing be to thee, Almighty God, that thou hast been pleased to make me endure so bitter anguish in the hour of my departure, thereby, as I trust, to purify me in some measure from the corruption of my sins. And thou, O Lord Jesus Christ! who, through the will of the Father, hast given life to the world by thy death, oh, deliver me!" While pronouncing the words "deliver me," she expired.

The reputation of her virtues, and the report that miracles had been wrought at her tomb, caused her name to be enrolled in the catalogue of saints by the church of Rome. Whatever may be thought of the miracles, it is a pleasure to find the following enlightened passage, from the pen of an ecclesiastic of the eleventh century:—"Others," says Turgot, "may admire the indications of sanctity which miracles afford. I much more admire in Margaret the works of mercy. Such *signs* (namely, miracles) are common to the evil and the good; but the works of true piety and charity are peculiar to the good. With better reason, therefore, ought we to admire the deeds of Margaret, which made her saintly, than her miracles, *had she performed any.*"

To this great and good man did the dying Margaret consign the spiritual guardianship of her two young daughters, the princesses Matilda and Mary, and her younger sons. Turgot has preserved the words with which she gave him this important charge; they will strike an answering chord on the heart of every mother. "Farewell!" she said; "my life draws to a close, but you may survive me long. To you I commit the charge of my children. Teach them, above all things, to love and fear God; and if any of them should be permitted to

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it was enclosed in a black case, from whence it was called *the black cross.* The cross itself was of gold, and set with large diamonds. The figure of the Saviour was exquisitely carved in ivory. After the death of Margaret it was deposited on the high altar of Dunfermline. When Edward I. kept court there, he seized on this cross as one of the English crown-jewels, and carried it into England. Robert Bruce so vehemently insisted on its restoration, that queen Isabella yielded it on the pacification during her regency in 1327; but its surrender exasperated the English more than the most flagrant of her misdeeds.—See her biography.

attain to the height of earthly grandeur, oh! then, in an especial manner, be to them a father and a guide. Admonish, and if need be, reprove them, lest they should be swelled with the pride of momentary glory, and through covetousness, or by reason of the prosperity of this world, offend their Creator, and forfeit eternal life. This, in the presence of Him who is now our only witness, I beseech you to promise and perform."[1]

Adversity was soon to try these youthful scions of royalty with her touchstone; and of the princess Matilda, as well as her saintly mother, it may justly be said,—

> "Stern, rugged nurse, thy rigid lore
> With patience many a year she bore."

Donald Bane, (the brother of Malcolm Canmore,) soon after the disastrous defeat and death of Matilda's father and eldest brother, seized the throne of Scotland, and commanded all the English exiles, of whatsoever degree, to quit the kingdom, under pain of death.[2] Edgar Atheling, Matilda's uncle, then conveyed to England the orphan family of his sister, the queen of Scotland, consisting of five young princes, and two princesses.[3]

He supported Matilda, her sister and brothers, who were all minors, privately, from his own means. They were in considerable personal danger, from the accusation of one of the knights at the English court, who told William Rufus that the Saxon prince had brought into England, and was raising up, a family of competitors for the English crown. A friend of Edgar, named Godwin, challenged and slew the calumniator; and William Rufus, supposing Providence had decided in favour of the innocent, treated Edgar and his adopted family with kindness and friendship. The princesses Matilda and Mary were placed by their uncle in the nunnery of Romsey, of which his surviving sister, Christina, was abbess; for the princes he obtained an honourable reception at the court of William Rufus, who eventually sent him at the head of an army to Scotland, with which the Atheling succeeded in re-establishing the young king Edgar, eldest brother of Matilda, on the throne of his ancestors.

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[1] Queen Margaret was buried at Dunfermline. Her body was disinterred at the Reformation, and the head is now preserved in a silver case at Douay, where the historian Carruthers declares he saw it, at the Scotch college. It was in extraordinary preservation, with a quantity of fine hair, fair in colour, still upon it. This was in 1785.—History of Scotland, vol. i. p. 313.

[2] Carruthers' History of Scotland, vol. i. p. 316.

[3] Hardyng, in his rhyming Chronicle, thus quaintly enumerates the posterity of Margaret Atheling, (see sir Henry Ellis's edition):—

> "Edward, Dunkan, Edgar, Alixander the gay,
> And David also, (that kings were all they say,
> Eache after other of Scotlande throughout,)
> Whose mother is now St. Margrete without doubt.
> At Dunfermlyn shrined and canonized;
> By whom Malcolyn a daughter had also,
> King Henry's wife the first, full well avised
> Queen Maude, that's right well loved England through.
> Those crosses fair and royal, as men go
> Through all England, she made at her expense,
> And divers good orders through her providence."

Ordericus Vitalis confirms, in a great measure, the statements of Turgot; and, after relating the death of queen Margaret, adds, "She had sent her two daughters, Edith (Matilda) and Mary, to Christina her sister, who was a religieuse of the abbey of Romsey, to be instructed by her in holy writ. These princesses were a long time pupils among the nuns. They were instructed by them, not only in the art of reading, but in the observance of good manners; and these devoted maidens, as they approached the age of womanhood, waited for the consolation of God. As we have said, they were orphans, deprived of both their parents, separated from their brothers, and far from the protecting care of kindred or friends. They had no home or hope but the cloister, and yet, by the mercy of God, they were not professed as nuns. They were destined by the Disposer of all earthly events for better things."

Camden proves that the abbey of Wilton, ever since the profession of the royal saint Editha,[1] was the place of nurture and education for the princesses of the Anglo-Saxon reigning family. This abbey of black Benedictine nuns was founded by king Alfred, and since his days it had been usual to elect a superior of his lineage. Wilton-abbey had been refounded by the queen Editha, consort to Edward the Confessor.[2] While that monarch was building Westminster-abbey, his queen employed her revenues in changing the nunnery of Wilton from a wooden edifice into one of stone.

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[1] Daughter of Edgar the Peaceable.

[2] Camden.

The abbey of Romsey was likewise a royal foundation, generally governed by an abbess of the blood-royal. Christina is first mentioned as abbess of Romsey in Hampshire, and afterwards as superior of the Wilton convent. As both belonged to the order of black Benedictines, this transfer was not difficult; but chroniclers do not mention when it was effected, simply stating the fact that the Scottish princess first dwelt at Romsey, yet when she grew up she was resident at Wilton-abbey, under the superintendence of the abbess Christina her aunt. Matilda thus became an inhabitant of the same abode where the royal virgins of her race had always received their education.[1] It was the express desire of the queen, her mother, who survived that request but a few hours, that she should be placed under the care of the lady Christina at Romsey.

While in these English convents, the royal maid was compelled to assume the thick black veil of a votaress,[2] as a protection from the insults of the lawless Norman nobles. The abbess Christina, her aunt, who was exceedingly desirous of seeing her beautiful niece become a nun professed, treated her very harshly if she removed this cumbrous and inconvenient envelope, which was composed of coarse black cloth or serge; some say it was a tissue of horse-hair. The imposition of this veil was considered by Matilda as an intolerable grievance. She wore it,[3] as she herself acknowledged, with sighs and tears in the presence of her stern aunt; and the moment she found herself alone, she flung it on the ground, and stamped it under her feet. During the seven years that Matilda resided in this dreary asylum, she was carefully instructed in all the learning of the age. Ordericus Vitalis says she was taught the '*literatoriam artem*,' of which she afterwards became, like her predecessor, Matilda of Flanders, most munificent patroness. She was also greatly skilled in music, for which her love amounted almost to a passion. When queen, we shall find her sometimes censured for the too great liberality she showed in rewarding, with costly presents, the monks who sang skilfully in the church service.[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.
[2] Eadmer.
[3] Ibid.

The superior education which this illustrious princess received during these years of conventual seclusion, eminently fitted her to become the consort of so accomplished a prince as Henry le Beauclerc. Robert of Gloucester, and Piers of Langtoft, and, above all, Eadmer, a contemporary, assert that the royal pair had been lovers before circumstances admitted of their union. These are the words of old quaint Robin on the subject:—

> "Special love there had *ere* been, as I understand,
> Between him and the king's fair daughter, Maud of Scotland.
> So that he willed her to wife, and the bishops also,
> And the high men of the land *radde*[2] him thereto."

Matilda received two proposals of marriage while she was in the nunnery at Romsey; one from Alan duke of Bretagne, the mature suitor before mentioned, who demanded her in marriage of his brother-in-law, William Rufus, and obtained his consent; but he was prevented by death from fulfilling his engagement. Had it been otherwise, Matilda's only refuge from this ill-assorted union would have been the irrevocable assumption of the black veil, of which she had testified such unqualified abhorrence. The other candidate for the hand of the exiled princess, was the young and handsome William Warren, earl of Surrey, the son of the Conqueror's youngest daughter Gundred, the favourite nephew of William Rufus, and one of the richest and most powerful of the baronage of England and Normandy. The profession of Matilda was delayed for a time by the addresses of these princes.[3] "But," continues the chronicler, "she was, by the grace of God, reserved for a higher destiny, and through his permission contracted a more illustrious marriage."[4] It is remarkable, that of the three lovers by whom Matilda was sought in marriage, one should have been the son-in-law, another the grandson, and the third the son, of that Norman conqueror who had established a rival dynasty on the throne of her ancestors.

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[1] Tyrrell. [2] *Radde*, advised. [3] Ordericus Vitalis. [4] Ibid.

Matilda pleaded devotion to a religious life, as an excuse for declining the addresses of Warren. It seems strange that she should have preferred a lengthened sojourn in a gloomy cloister, to a union with a young, handsome, and wealthy prince of the reigning family of England, unless her refusal of Warren may be regarded as a confirmation of the statements of Eadmer, Robert of Gloucester, William of Malmesbury, and others of the ancient chroniclers, as to 'the special love' that existed between Henry Beauclerc and Matilda, during the season of their mutual adversity. The nunnery of Wilton was not far from Winchester, the principal seat of the Norman sovereign; and when we reflect on the great intimacy which subsisted between Matilda's uncle, Edgar Atheling, and the sons of the Conqueror, it appears by no means improbable that prince Henry might have accompanied him in some of his visits to his royal kinswomen, and perhaps been admitted, under the sanction of his presence, to converse with the princesses, and even to have enjoyed the opportunity of seeing Matilda without her veil; which, we learn from her own confession, she took every opportunity of throwing aside. Nor was this to be wondered at, since, if we may credit the testimony of contemporary writers, her face was well worth the looking upon. The learned Hildebert,[1] her friend and correspondent, has celebrated her personal charms in the eloquent Latin poems which he addressed to her, both before and after her marriage. The Norman chronicle declares that she was a lady of great beauty, and much beloved by king Henry; and Matthew Paris says she was "very fair, and elegant in person, as well as learned, holy, and wise." These qualities, combined with her high lineage, rendered her, doubtless, an object of attraction to the Norman princes.

Henry Beauclerc was ten years the senior of his nephew Warren; but his high mental acquirements and accomplishments were, to a mind like that of Matilda of Scotland, far beyond the meretricious advantages which his more youthful rival could boast. Robert of Gloucester, in his rhyming

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[1] Afterwards archbishop of Mans.—See Hildeberti Opera.

Chronicle, gives this quaint summary of the birth, education, and characteristics of Henry:—

> "In England was he born, Henri, this nobleman,
> In the third year that his father England wan;
> He was, of all his sons, best fitted king to be,
> Of fairest form and manners, and most gentle and free;
> For that he was the youngest, to book his father him drew,
> And he became as it befel a good clerk enow.
> One time when he was young, his brother smote him, I wis,
> And he wept while his father stood by and beheld all this;
> 'Ne weep now,' he said, 'loving son, for it shall come to be,
> That thou shalt yet be king, and that thou shalt see.'
> His father made him, at Westminster, knight of his own hand,
> In the nineteenth year of his age, &c. &c.
> Taller he was some deal than his brethren were,
> Fair man and stout enow, with brown hair."

Henry was regarded by the people of the land with a greater degree of complacency than the elder sons of the Conqueror, from the circumstance of his being an English-born prince. While yet a tender infant, his mighty sire named him as a witness (the only male witness) of the following curious charter to one of his followers, the founder of the family of Hunter of Hopton:—

> "I, William the king, the third year of my reign,
> Give to thee, Norman Hunter, to me that art both liefe[1] and dear,
> The Hop and the Hopton, and all the bounds up and down,
> Under the earth to hell, above the earth to heaven,
> From me and mine to thee and thine,
> As good and as fair as ever they mine were.
> To witnesse that this is sooth,
> I bite the white waxe with my tooth,
> Before Jugge,[2] Maude, and Margery,
> And my young sonne Henry,
> For a bowe and a broad arrowe,
> When I sall come to hunt on Yarrowe."[3]

The rhymes of this quaint feudal grant are undoubtedly far more agreeable to the ear than the halting heroics of honest Robert of Gloucester, previously quoted, though compounded more than a century before his jingling chronicle was written. Several of the charters of William the Conqueror are in this form, and with the names of the same members of his family. It is probable that they were executed in the presence of his queen "Maud;" "Jugge" (sometimes used as an abbreviation for Judith) must have been his niece Judith, afterwards the wife of Waltheof; and Margery, a daughter, who is sometimes enumerated in his family by the chroniclers; and to these the name of that notable witness, the baby Henry, was doubtless added as a joke by the royal sire. Biting the white wax was supposed to give particular authenticity to conveyances from the crown, which formerly were each duly furnished with a proof impression of that primitive substitute for the great seal of England the royal eye-tooth, sometimes familiarly specified by the monarch as his 'fang-tooth.' This custom, which took its rise from very remote antiquity, was needlessly adopted by the Anglo-Norman line of sovereigns, whose broad seals are of peculiarly fine workmanship, bearing their veritable effigies, crowned, sceptred, and in royal robes, seated on the king's stone bench; and on the reverse of the seal the same monarch is figured, armed cap-à-pié, and mounted on a war-charger, gallantly appointed.[1] Such are the impressions affixed to all their charters.

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[1] *Liefe*, loving.

[2] Pronounced *Juey*, which rhymes to Margery; the rhymes, it will be observed, recur in the middle of the line.

[3] Stowe.

It is among the boasts of Cambridge[2] that Henry, so celebrated for his learning, received his education there. The ancient annals of St. Austin's, Canterbury, however, affirm "that he was instructed in philosophy beyond seas, where, for his knowledge in the liberal sciences, he was by the French surnamed Beauclerc."[3]

The following dialogue took place between Henry and his royal sire, when the latter lay on his death-bed at Hermentrude,[4] and was concluding his elaborate confession of his past deeds of oppression and cruelty with the verbal bequest of his dominions to his two eldest sons. "And what do you give to me, father?" interrupted Henry, who stood weeping at the bedside, less touched, we fear, at the awful list of sins and wickednesses of which his dying sire had just disburthened his conscience, than at the tenour of a last will and testament in which he appeared to have no share. "Five thousand pounds in silver, out of my treasury, do I give thee," replied the Conqueror. "But what shall I do with treasure, if I have neither castle nor domain?" demanded the disappointed prince. "Be patient, my son, and comfort thyself in God," rejoined the expiring monarch; "thy elder brothers do but go before thee. Robert shall have Normandy, and William England; but thou shalt be the inheritor of all my honours, and shall excel both thy brethren in riches and power." This oracular speech, though far enough from proving satisfactory at the time to the landless Henry, was afterwards magnified into a prophetic annunciation of his accession to the united dominions of England and Normandy.

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[1] Speed.

[2] J. Caius Cantabrig.

[3] St. Austin's Lib. MSS. A learned writer in the Archæologia supposes that this appellation was won by Henry's "English Fables" in the Æsopian style adding that the celebrated troubadour poetess, Marie of France, who flourished in the reign of our Henry III., has translated the English monarch's work into Norman French.

[4] Speed.

Discontented as Henry was with the paternal legacy, he was in such haste to secure its payment, that he left the last duties to the remains of his royal sire to the care of strangers, while he flew to make his claim upon the treasury of the departed sovereign; rightly judging, that unless he forestalled his elder brethren in taking possession of the bequest, his chance of receiving it would be but small. In fact, Robert, whose extravagance had exhausted all his resources before he succeeded to the dukedom of Normandy, besought his youngest brother to assist him with a loan of at least part of the money. Henry, who had all the worldly wisdom of a premature statesman, complied, on condition of being put in possession of his mother's bequest of the Cotentin. Robert agreed; but, after he had been foiled in his attempt to dethrone Rufus, he returned to Normandy with exhausted coffers, and wrongfully repossessed himself of the Cotentin. Henry, greatly enraged at this treatment, was preparing to take up arms against Robert, when the latter, finding himself attacked by William, and abandoned by his false ally, Philip of France, thought proper to make the most earnest solicitations to Henry for assistance, and forgiveness for the late outrage of which he had been guilty. Henry, being mollified by the submission of his elder brother, and understanding that a plot was in agitation to deliver Rouen to William, suddenly entered the city, and seizing Conon, the head of the conspirators, charged him with his treason to the duke, and caused him to be flung headlong from one of the highest towers. By this decisive step Henry preserved the capital for Robert.

Robert and William soon after came to an amicable agreement, and conceiving a sudden affection for each other, they terminated their quarrel by making their wills in each other's favour, without any mention of Henry. Henry regarded this as a great affront, especially on the part of Robert, to whom he had rendered such signal services, and demanded of him either a restitution of his silver, or to be put in possession of the Cotentin. On Robert's refusal, he seized on Mount St. Michael, where he strongly entrenched himself.

The youthful adventurer maintained his rocky fortress with obstinate valour against the united efforts of his august brothers of England and Normandy, till he was reduced to the greatest straits for want of water. He represented his distress to Robert in a moving message, and obtained leave to supply his garrison with water, and a present of wine for his own use. Rufus upbraided Robert with his compliance, which he called "an act of folly."—"What!" replied Robert, with a sudden burst of that generous warmth of feeling which formed the redeeming trait of his character, "is the quarrel between us and our brother of that importance, that we should make him die of thirst? We may have occasion for a brother hereafter, but where shall we find another if we destroy this?" After Robert had besieged St. Michael's-mount during the whole of Lent, he brought Henry to terms; who, weary, perhaps, of keeping a stricter fast than even the church of Rome enjoined at that season, surrendered the fortress; and having permission to go whither he pleased, wandered about Germany and France for some time, forsaken of every one save four faithful domestics, by whom he was attended.

In the year 1094 we find, from Matthew Paris, that Henry was in England, and employed by William Rufus in assisting to quell the formidable rebellion of Robert Mowbray, the lord of Northumberland. Prince Henry's poverty, and dependence on the caprices of his brother the 'red king,' subjected him occasionally to the sneers of the wealthy Norman barons, but more especially of his kinsman and rival Warren,[1] who took occasion, from his swiftness in pursuit of the forest game, "which oft-times," says the chronicle of Normandy, "he, for lack of horse or dog, followed on foot, to bestow the name of 'Deer's-foot' on the landless prince. This greatly troubled Henry, who hated Warren to the death, but had no power to avenge himself, because the 'red king' loved Warren greatly."[2] It is possible that Warren's courtship of Matilda of Scotland was one cause of Henry's bitter animosity.[3] This courtship was sanctioned by Rufus, and some of the ancient chroniclers assert that Matilda was contracted to him, but this appears without foundation.

Henry was in his thirty-second year when the glancing aside of Wat Tyrrel's arrow made him king of England. The chroniclers of that era record that, from whatever cause, omens, dreams, and predictions of the death of the 'red king' were rife in the land immediately preceding that event. Prince Henry was at this fatal hunting party;[5] and Wace, the minstrel chronicler of the Norman line of princes, relates a most remarkable adventure that befell him on this occasion.[6] "Prince Henry, being separated from the royal party while pursuing his game in an adjoining glen of the forest, chanced to snap the string of his cross-bow, or arblast, and repairing to the hut of a forester to get it mended or replaced, he was, the moment he entered this sylvan abode, saluted as king by an old woman whom he found there," whose description is somewhat similar to that of one of the witches in Macbeth.[7] The following is a literal version of her address, from the Norman French rhymes of Wace:—

"Hasty news to thee I bring,
Henry, thou art now a king;
Mark the words and heed them well,
Which to thee in sooth I tell,
And recall them in the hour
Of thy regal state and power."

Before Henry had recovered from the surprise with which the weird woman's prediction had startled him, the cries of the 'red king's' attendants proclaimed the fatal accident that had befallen their royal master, and the hasty flight of the unlucky marksman by whose erring shaft he had died. Prince Henry acted as Rufus doubtless would have done in his case; he sprang to his saddle, and made the best of his way to Winchester, without bestowing a moment's care or attention on the body of his deceased brother, which was irreverently thrown into the cart of one Purkiss, a Saxon charcoal-burner, that was passing through the forest, and, on no gentler bier, was ignobly borne back to the city which he had quitted that morning with such proud parade.[1] Robert of Gloucester relates this circumstance, with his usual quaint minuteness; and among a number of his lame and tame lines, the following graphic couplet occurs, which we think our readers will consider worthy of quotation:—

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[1] Wace.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Chronicle of Normandy, by Wace.
[4] Malmesbury. Saxon Chron.
[5] S. Dunelm.
[6] Wace.
[7] Ibid.

"To Winchester they bare him, all midst his green wound,
And ever as he lay, the blood well'd to ground."

William Breteuil,[2] the royal treasurer, was also at this memorable hunting party, and with him prince Henry actually rode a race to Winchester,—ay, and won it too; for when Breteuil arrived at the door of the treasury, he found prince Henry standing before it, who greeted him with a demand of the keys. Breteuil boldly declared, "That both treasure and crown belonged to the prince's eldest brother, duke Robert of Normandy, who was then absent in the Holy Land, and for that prince he would keep the treasures of the late king his master." Then Henry drew his sword, and, backed by his powerful friend Henry Bellomonte, afterwards earl of Leicester, and other nobles of his party, forced the keys from his kinsman Breteuil, and took possession of the treasure and regalia. Breteuil loudly protested against the wrong that was done to duke Robert.

Some of the nobles who possessed large estates in Normandy sided with Breteuil, in advocating the rights of the royal crusader; and the debate growing very stormy, it was considered more expedient to argue the momentous question in the council-chamber. Thither the nobles and prelates adjourned; but while they were engaged in advocating, according as interest or passion swayed, the rival claims of Robert and Henry to the vacant throne, the majority being inclined for the elder brother, (the brave but proverbially *unready* Robert,) Henry had successfully pleaded his own cause to the populace in the streets of Winchester; and they, strong in numbers, and animated with sudden affection for the English-born prince, who had promised to bestow upon them English laws and an English queen, gathered round the palace, and quickened the decision of the divided peers in council by making the name of Henry resound in their ears; and Henry, thus elected by the voice of the people, was immediately proclaimed king at Winchester. The remains of the luckless Rufus were hurried into the grave, with a sort of hunter's mass, the following morning at an early hour, in Winchester cathedral;[1] and Henry hastened to London, where, on Sunday, the *nones* of August, the fourth day after his brother's death, he was crowned in Westminster-abbey, by Maurice, bishop of London. Before the regal circlet was placed on his brow, "Henry, at the high altar at Westminster, promised to God and the people," says the Saxon Chronicle, "to annul the unrighteous acts that took place in his brother's reign, and he was crowned on that condition."[2]

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[1] Saxon Chron. The lineal descendants of the said charcoal-maker, by name Purkiss, still live within the distance of a bow-shot from the spot where Rufus fell, and continue to exercise the trade of their ancestor.—Milner's Winchester.

[2] William Breteuil was the son of the Conqueror's great friend and counsellor, Fitz-Osborn, surnamed 'the Proud Spirit.'—See the preceding biography.

Henry promised every thing that could reasonably be demanded of him, and set about reforming the abuses and corruptions that had prevailed during the licentious reign of the bachelor king, and completely secured his popularity with the English people by declaring his resolution of wedding a princess of the blood of Alfred, who had been brought up and educated among them. Accordingly he demanded Matilda, the daughter of Malcolm king of Scotland, and Margaret Atheling, of her brother, Edgar king of Scotland. The proposal was exceedingly agreeable to the Scottish monarch, but great difficulties were opposed to the completion of this marriage by those who were of opinion that she had embraced a religious life.[1] The abbess Christina, Matilda's aunt, in particular, whose Saxon prejudices could not brook the idea that the throne of the Norman line of sovereigns should be strengthened by an alliance with the royal blood of Alfred, protested, "that her niece was a veiled nun, and that it would be an act of sacrilege to remove her from her convent."

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[1] The monument that Henry I. raised for his brother Rufus, before the high altar at Winchester, is still to be seen there; he put himself to no great cost for funeral expenses, for it is a plain gravestone of black marble, of that shape called *dos d'âne*, to be seen, of brick or freestone, in country churchyards.

[2] Saxon Chronicle

Henry's heart was set upon the marriage, but he would not venture to outrage popular opinion by wedding a consecrated nun. In this dilemma, he wrote a pressing letter to the learned Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, who had been unjustly despoiled of his revenues by William Rufus, and was then in exile at Lyons, entreating him to return, and render him his advice and assistance in this affair. When Anselm heard the particulars of the case, he declared that it was too mighty for his single decision, and therefore summoned a council of the church at Lambeth, for the purpose of entering more fully into this important question.[2] Matilda made her appearance before the synod, and was closely interrogated by the primate Anselm, in the presence of the whole hierarchy of England, as to the reality of her alleged devotion to a religious life.[3] The particulars of her examination have been preserved by Eadmer, who, as the secretary of the archbishop Anselm, was doubtless an eye-witness of this interesting scene, and, in all probability, recorded the very words uttered by the princess.

The archbishop commenced by stating the objections to her marriage, grounded on the prevailing report that she had embraced a religious life, and declared, "that no motive whatever would induce him to dispense with her vow, if it had already been given to Almighty God." The princess denied that there had been any such engagement on her part. She was asked, "If she had embraced a religious life, either by her own choice or the vow of her parents;" and she replied, "Neither." Then she was examined as to the fact of her having worn the black veil of a votaress in her father's court, and subsequently in the nunneries of Romsey and Wilton. "I do not deny," said Matilda, "having worn the veil in my father's court, for when I was a child, my aunt Christina put a piece of black cloth over my head; but when my father saw me with it, he snatched it off in a great rage, and execrated the person who had put it on me. I afterwards made a pretence of wearing it, to excuse myself from unsuitable marriages; and on one of these occasions, my father tore the veil and threw it on the ground, observing to Alan earl of Bretagne, who stood by, that it was his intention to give me in marriage, not to devote me to the church."[1] She also admitted that she had assumed the veil in the nunnery of Romsey, as a protection from the lawless violence of the Norman nobles, and that she had continued to wear that badge of conventual devotion, against her own inclination, through the harsh compulsion of her aunt, the abbess Christina. "If I attempted to remove it," continued Matilda, "she would torment me with harsh blows and sharp reproaches. Sighing and trembling, I wore it in her presence; but as soon as I withdrew from her sight, I always threw it off, and trampled upon it."[2]

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[1] Eadmer.

[2] Not long after the return of archbishop Anselm to England, the king, by the advice of his friends, resolved to leave off his mistresses, and marry; and he, *having a very great affection for Matilda*, daughter to Malcolm, late king of Scotland, resolved, if it might be lawful, to marry her.—Tyrrell.

[3] Eadmer. Malmesbury.

This explanation was considered perfectly satisfactory by the council at Lambeth, and they pronounced that "Matilda, daughter of Malcolm king of Scotland, had proved that she had not embraced a religious life, either by her own choice or the vow of her parents, and she was therefore free to contract marriage with the king." The council, in addition to this declaration, thought proper to make public the most cogent reason which the Scottish princess had given for her assumption of the black veil on her coming to England; which was done in the following remarkable words: "When the great king William conquered this land, many of his followers, elated by so great a victory, and thinking that every thing ought to be subservient to their will and pleasure, not only seized the provisions of the conquered, but invaded the honour of their matrons and virgins whenever they had an opportunity. This obliged many young ladies, who dreaded their violence, to put on the veil to preserve their honour."[1]

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[1] Eadmer.

[2] Ibid.

According to the Saxon chroniclers, Matilda, notwithstanding her repugnance to the consecrated veil, exhibited a very maidenly reluctance to enter the holy pale of matrimony with a royal husband. It is possible that the report of the immoral tenour of Henry's life before he ascended the throne, which was evidenced by his acknowledging the claims of twenty illegitimate children, might be regarded by a princess of her purity of mind and manners as a very serious objection; and if, as many of the early chroniclers intimate, there had been a previous engagement between Henry and herself, she of course felt both displeasure and disgust at his amours with the beautiful Nesta, daughter of the prince of Wales, and other ladies too numerous to particularize. It is certain that after the council at Lambeth had pronounced her free to marry, Matilda resisted for a time the entreaties of the king, and the commands of her royal brother and sovereign, to accept the brilliant destiny which she was offered.

All who were connected with the Saxon royal line importuned Matilda, meantime, with such words as these: "O most noble and most gracious of women! if thou wouldst, thou couldst raise up the ancient honour of England; thou wouldst be a sign of alliance, a pledge of reconciliation. But if thou persistest in thy refusal, the enmity between the Saxon and Norman races will be eternal; human blood will never cease to flow."[2] Thus urged, the royal recluse ceased to object to a marriage, whereby she was to become the bond of peace to a divided nation, and the dove of the newly-sealed covenant between the Norman sovereign and her own people. Henry promised to confirm to the English nation their ancient laws and privileges, as established by Alfred, and ratified by Edward the Confessor,—in short, to become a constitutional monarch; and on those conditions the daughter of the royal line of Alfred consented to share his throne.

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[1] Eadmer.

[2] Saxon Chronicle.

Matthew Paris says positively that Matilda was a professed nun, and so averse to this marriage, that she invoked a curse upon all the descendants that might proceed from her union with the Norman king. But this is contradicted by all other historians; and if any foundation existed for the story, we think friend Matthew must, by a strange slip of the pen, have written down the name of the meek and saintly Matilda instead of that of the perverse virago the abbess Christina, her aunt, who was so greatly opposed to those auspicious nuptials, and, for aught we know, might have been as much addicted to the evil habit of imprecation as she was to scolding and fighting. Matilda's demurs, after all, occasioned little delay, for the archbishop Anselm did not return to England till October; the council at Lambeth was held in the latter end of that month, and her marriage and coronation took place on Sunday, November 11th, being St. Martin's-day, just three months and six days after the inauguration of her royal lord at Westminster, August 5th, 1100,—which we may consider quick work, for the dispatch of such important business and solemn ceremonials of state. William of Malmesbury tells us that Henry's friends, especially bishops, having counselled him to reform his life and contract lawful wedlock, he married, on St. Martin's-day, Matilda, daughter of Malcolm king of Scotland, to whom he had long been greatly attached, not regarding the marriage-portion, provided he could possess her whom he had so ardently desired; for though she was of noble descent, being great niece of king Edward by his brother Edmund, yet she possessed little fortune, being doubly an orphan. This is surely a convincing testimony of the strength of Henry's affection for Matilda.

The scene of their marriage is thus described by a contemporary, who was most probably an eye-witness: "At the wedding of Matilda and Henry the First, there was a most prodigious concourse of nobility and people assembled in and about the church at Westminster, when, to prevent all calumny and ill report that the king was about to marry a nun, the archbishop Anselm mounted into a pulpit, and gave the multitude a history of the events proved before the synod, and its judgment,—that the lady Matilda of Scotland was free from any religious vow, and might dispose of herself in marriage as she thought fit. The archbishop finished by asking the people in a loud voice, whether any one there objected to this decision: upon which they answered unanimously, with a loud shout, 'that the matter was rightly settled.' Accordingly the lady was immediately married to the king, and crowned before that vast assembly."[1] A more simple yet majestic appeal to the sense of the people, in regard to a royal marriage, history records not.

An exquisitely beautiful epithalamium, in honour of these auspicious nuptials, was written by Matilda's friend Hildebert, in elegant Latin verse, wherein he congratulates both England and Henry on the possession of the doubly royal bride Matilda. He eulogizes her virtues, and describes her modest and maidenly deportment as enhancing her youthful charms when, with blushes that outvied the crimson of her royal robe, she stood at the altar, invested with her royal insignia, a virgin queen and bride, in whom the hopes of England hailed the future mother of a mighty line of kings.[2]

To this auspicious union of the Anglo-Norman sovereign Henry I. with Matilda of Scotland, a princess of English lineage, English education, and an English heart, we may trace all the constitutional blessings which this free country at present enjoys. It was through the influence of this virtuous queen that Henry granted the important charter which formed the model and precedent of that great palladium of English liberty, Magna Charta; and we call upon our readers to observe, that it was the direct ancestress of our present sovereign-lady who refused to quit her gloomy conventual prison, and to give her hand to the handsomest and most accomplished sovereign of his time, till she had obtained just and merciful laws for her suffering country, the repeal of the tyrannical imposition of the curfew, and, in some slight degree, a recognition of the rights of the commons.

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[1] Eadmer.

[2] Opera Hildeberti, p. 1367.

When the marriage of Matilda of Scotland with Henry I. took place, a hundred copies of this digest of the righteous laws of Alfred and Edward the Confessor were made, and committed to the keeping of the principal bishoprics and monasteries in England; but when these were sought for, in the reign of John, to form a legal authority for the demands of the people, Rapin says only one could be found, which was exhibited to the barons by cardinal Langton. This was, in fact, the simple model on which Magna Charta was framed. It is supposed that Henry I., after Matilda's death, destroyed all the copies (on which he could lay his hands) of a covenant which, in the latter years of his reign, he scrupled not to infringe whenever he felt disposed.

Hardyng, after recording the death of the 'red king,' relates the accession of Henry I., and his marriage with Matilda of Scotland, in the following rude stanzas:—

"Henry, his brother, the first king of that name,
Was crowned with all the honour that might be;
He reconciled St. Anselm, who came home,
And crowned Maude his wife full fair and free,
That daughter was (full of benignite)
To king Malcolyne and St. Margrete the queen
Of Scotland, which afore that time had been;

Of whom he gat William, Richard, and Molde,
Whose goodness is yet spoken of full wide;
If she were fair, her virtues many-fold
Exceeded far—all vice she set aside;
Debates that were engendered of pride
She set at rest with all benevolence,
And visited the sick and poor with diligence.

The prisoners, and women eke with child,
Lying in abject misery aye about,
Clothes, meat, and bedding new and undefiled,
And wine and ale she gave withouten doubt;
When she saw need in countries all throughout,
Those crosses all that yet be most royal
In the highways, with gold she made them all."[1]

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[1] Sir Henry Ellis's version.

MATILDA OF SCOTLAND,

QUEEN OF HENRY I.

CHAPTER II.

Popularity of Matilda's marriage—Called Matilda Atheling—Her charities—Her brother, king Alexander the Fierce—Her works of utility—Equitable laws of king Henry—Normans nickname the king and queen—Duke Robert's invasion—Birth of Matilda's son—Robert's consideration for Matilda—Henry's quarrels with archbishop Anselm—Matilda's letters—England threatened with excommunication—Matilda writes to the pope—Duke Robert re-lands in England—Matilda reconciles him to the king—Anselm's return to England—Matilda's friendship for him—Birth of princess Matilda—Robert regrets the loss of his pension—Reviles Matilda—Battle of Tinchebray—Capture of Robert and the queen's uncle Edgar—Pardoned through the queen's influence—Court first kept at Windsor by Henry and Matilda—Princess Matilda betrothed to the emperor—Court at Winchester—Marriage of prince William—Portrait of queen Matilda—Departure of empress Matilda—Parliament held—Woodstock-palace completed—Revolt in Normandy—Illness of the queen—Her death—King Henry's grief—Burial of Matilda—Inscription to her memory—Her palace at Westminster—Present remains—Statue of Matilda—Her children.

MATILDA's English ancestry and English education rendered the new king's marriage with her a most popular measure with the Anglo-Saxon people, of whom the great bulk of his subjects was composed. By them the royal bride was fondly styled Matilda Atheling, and regarded as the representative of their own regretted sovereigns. The allegiance which the mighty Norman conqueror, and his despotic son the 'red king,' had never been able to obtain, except through the sternest measures of compulsion, and which, in defiance of the dreadful penalties of loss of eyes, limbs, and life, had been frequently withdrawn from these powerful monarchs, was freely and faithfully accorded to the husband of Matilda, Henry I., by the Saxon population. All the reforms effected by his enlightened government, and all the good laws which his enlarged views of political economy taught that wise monarch to adopt, were attributed, by his Anglo-Saxon subjects, to the beneficial influence of his young queen. Robert of Gloucester was fully impressed with these ideas, as we may plainly perceive in the following lines in his rhyming Chronicle, in which he speaks of Henry's marriage:—

> "So that as soon as he was king, on St. Martyn's-day I ween,
> He spoused her that was called Maude the good queen,
> That was *kind*[1] *heir of England*, as I have told before.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Many were the good laws that were made in England
> Through Maude the good queen, as I understand."

The Londoners, whose prosperity had sensibly diminished in consequence of the entire absence of female royalty, beheld with unfeigned satisfaction the palace of Edward the Confessor, at Westminster, once more graced by the presence of a queen of the blood of Alfred, whose virtues, piety, and learning rendered her a worthy successor of the last Saxon queen who had held her court there, Editha,

> "That gracious rose of Godwin's thorny stem."

Those to whom the memory of that illustrious lady was justly dear were probably not unmindful of the fact, that the youthful queen, on whom the hopes of England were so fondly fixed, had received that genuine Saxon name at the baptismal font; and though, in compliment to her Norman godfather, she was called Matilda, she was also Editha.

Matilda fully verified the primitive title bestowed by the Saxons on their queens, Hlafdige, or 'the giver of bread.' Her charities were of a most extensive character, and her tender compassion for the sufferings of the sick poor carried her almost beyond the bounds of reason, to say nothing of the restraints imposed on royalty. She imitated the example of her mother St. Margaret, queen of Scotland, both in the strictness of her devotional exercises, and in her personal attentions to those who were labouring under bodily afflictions.[2] She went every day in Lent to Westminster-abbey, barefoot, and clothed in a garment of haircloth; and she would wash and kiss the feet of the poorest people, for which, according to Robert of Gloucester, she was once reproved, not without reason, by a courtier. He had his answer, however, as our readers will perceive from the following curious dialogue:—

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[1] 'Kind' means, in ancient English, relationship: 'next of kin,' a familiar expression, is derived from it.

[2] Weever.

> " 'Madam, for Godde's love is this well ado,
> To handle such unclean limbs, and to kiss so?
> Foul would the king think, if this thing he wist,
> And right well avile him ere he your lips kist.'
> 'Sir, sir!' quoth the queen, 'be still. Why say you so?
> Our Lord himself example gave for to do so.' "[1]

On another occasion, her brother, Alexander the Fierce, king of Scotland, when on a visit to the court of her royal husband, entering Matilda's apartments, found her on her knees, engaged in washing the feet of some aged mendicants; on which she entreated him to avail himself of the opportunity of performing a good and acceptable work of charity and humiliation, by assisting her in this labour of love, for the benefit of his soul. The warlike majesty of Scotland smiled, and left the room without making any reply to this invitation.[2] Perhaps he was conscious of his want of skill as an assistant at a pediluvium party; or it might be, that he had seen too much of such scenes during the life of his pious mother queen Margaret, and feared that his sister would carry her works of benevolence to extremes that might prove displeasing to the taste of so refined a prince as Henry Beauclerc.

But to do Matilda justice, her good works in general bore a character of more extended usefulness; so much so, that we even feel the benefit of them to this day, in the ancient bridge she built over 'my lady Lea.' Once being, with her train on horseback, in danger of perishing while fording the river Lea at Oldford, during *a high flood*, in gratitude for her preservation she built the first arched bridge ever known in England, a little higher up the stream, called by the Saxons

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[1] Robert of Gloucester.

[2] Wendover, Flowers of History, translated by Dr. Gilles, p. 459. The chronicler attributes the anecdote to prince David, giving date 1105. David was certainly conveniently at hand, as he lived in Scotland-yard, close to Westminster-palace, having married the countess St. Lys, heiress of earl Waltheof; but David, who was afterwards canonized, would have given his aid right willingly. It is Robert of Gloucester who says the brother to whom Matilda gave the charitable lesson was Alexander.

Bow-bridge,[1] still to be seen at Stratford-le-Bow, "though the ancient and mighty London-bridge has been broken down." Bow-bridge she built at the head of the town of Stratford likewise Channel's-bridge, over a tributary stream of the Lea the way between them being well paved with gravel. She gave certain manors, and a mill called Wiggin-mill, for ever, towards keeping in repair the said bridges and way.[2]

Matilda founded the hospital at St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and also Christ-Church,[3] which stood on the very spot now called Duke's-place, noted as the resort of a low class of Jews. This excellent queen also directed her attention to the important object of making new roads, and repairing the ancient highways that had fallen into decay during the stormy years which had succeeded the peaceful and prosperous reign of her great uncle, Edward the Confessor. By this means, travellers and itinerant merchants were greatly facilitated in their journeys through the then wild and perilous country, which, with the exception of the four great Roman ways,[4] was only intersected by a few scattered cart-tracks, through desolate moors, heaths, and uncultivated wastes and woodlands. These public benefits, which Matilda the Good conferred upon the people from whose patriotic monarchs she derived her descent, were in all probability the fruits of her regency during the absence of her royal husband in Normandy; for it is scarcely to be supposed that such stupendous undertakings could have been effected by the limited power and revenues of a mere queen-consort.

Henry the First, be it remembered, was placed on the throne by the Saxon division of his subjects, who were the commons of England; and by them he was supported in his regal authority against the Norman aristocracy, who formed a powerful party in favour of his elder brother's pretensions to the crown of England. The moral and political reforms with which Henry commenced his reign, and, above all, the even-handed measure of justice which he caused to be observed towards all who presumed to infringe the laws, gave great offence to many of those haughty nobles, who had been accustomed to commit the most flagrant crimes with impunity, and to oppress their humbler neighbours without fear of being arraigned for their misdeeds. The establishment of the equitable laws which protected the wives and daughters of Englishmen from insult, the honest trader from wrong and robbery, and the poor from violence, were attributed to the influence of Matilda, whom they insultingly styled "the Saxon woman," and murmured at the virtuous restraints which her presence and authority imposed upon the court.[1] The conjugal affection which subsisted between the royal pair excited, withal, the ridicule of those who had been the profligate associates of the bachelor-king, William Rufus; and it was universally displeasing to the haughty Norman peers to see the king's gracious demeanour towards the hitherto oppressed and dispirited English portion of his subjects, for whom his amiable consort was constantly labouring to procure a recognition of their rights. "The malice of certain evil-minded men," says Eadmer, "busied itself in inventing the most cutting railleries on king Henry, and his wife of English blood. They nicknamed them Leofric and Godiva, and always called them so when not in the royal presence."[2] According to William of Malmesbury, however, duke Robert's partisans were not always so polite as to restrain their malapert language till the king and queen had withdrawn. "They openly branded their lord with sarcasms," says that quaint chronicler, "calling him Godric," (which means 'godly governor,') "and his consort Goddiva. Henry heard these taunts: with a terrific grin, indicative of his inward wrath, he repressed the contemptuous expressions aimed at him by the madness of fools by a studied silence; for he was a calm dissembler of his enmities, but in due season avenged himself with interest." It is probable that Warren, the disappointed suitor of Matilda, and his kinsman Mortimer, with others of the audacious Norman *quens*, who had previously exercised their wit in bestowing an offensive *sobriquet* on Henry before his accession to the throne, were among the foremost of those invidious detractors, who could not endure to witness the wedded happiness of their sovereign, and the virtuous influence of his youthful queen.

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[1] Bow, from *bogen*, an arch, a word in the German language, pronounced with the *g* sounded like *y*, which brings it close to the Anglo-Saxon.

[2] Hayward's Three Norman Kings.

[3] Pennant.

[4] Which mighty works were of infinite use to our ancestors in ages later than the Norman era. Robert of Gloucester speaks of their utility in his day, and says,—

"Thilk ways by mony a town do wend."

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[1] Eadmer. Thierry.

[2] Ibid.

The invasion of duke Robert, Henry's eldest brother, on his return from the Holy Land, took place in the second year of Matilda's marriage. King Henry's fleet being manned with Norman seamen, and, of course, under the influence of Norman chiefs, revolted; and instead of guarding the coasts of England from the threatened invasion of the duke, swept across the narrow seas, and brought him and his armament in triumph to Portsmouth, where he was joined by the majority of the Anglo-Norman baronage.[1] Robert had also his partisans among the English; for Edgar Atheling so far forgot the interests of his royal niece, queen Matilda, as to espouse the cause of his friend Robert against the king her husband.

Robert landed at Portsmouth, and marched direct to Winchester, where queen Matilda then lay-in with her first-born child, William the Atheling. When this circumstance was related to the duke, he relinquished his purpose of storming the city, with the observation, "that it never should be said he commenced the war by an assault on a woman in childbed, for that would be a base action."[2] Matilda duly appreciated this generous consideration on the part of her royal brother-in-law and godfather, and exerted all her influence to negotiate a peace between him and her lord, in which she was assisted by the good offices of the archbishop Anselm; and this formidable crisis passed over without the effusion of a drop of blood.[3] These are Hardyng's words on the subject:—

> "But Anselm archbishop of Canterbury,
> And queen Matilda, made them well accord;
> The king to pay three thousand marks yearly
> To duke Robert, withouten more discord."

After this happy pacification, Henry invited Robert to become his guest at the court, where the easy-tempered duke was feasted and entertained, greatly to his satisfaction, by his royal god-daughter Matilda,[4] who, in her love of music, and the encouragement she bestowed on minstrels, or *trouvères*, quite coincided with the tastes of her sponsor and brother-in-law. So much did Robert enjoy his sojourn at Henry's court, that he stayed there upwards of six months, though his presence was greatly required in his own dominions.[1]

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[1] Saxon Annals, A.D. 1101.
[2] Chronique de Normandie.
[3] Ibid.
[4] M. Paris.

An unfortunate misunderstanding took place between Henry and the archbishop Anselm, early in the year 1103. This quarrel originated in an attempt made by the archbishop to deprive the king of a privilege which had been claimed by the Saxon monarchs, of appointing his own bishops. Anselm wished to restore the nomination to the chapters, which Henry resolutely opposed. Both appealed to the pope, but Anselm went to Rome to plead his own cause against the king's three advocates, and remained in exile. The queen was much afflicted at the dissension between her royal husband and her old and valued spiritual father. She had loved and revered Anselm from her childhood, and he had been mainly instrumental in rescuing her from the joyless thraldom of the cloister, and securing to her the elevated position she enjoyed. She had been accustomed to correspond with Anselm, and she still continued to do so, in the hope of composing the unhappy differences which had driven him into exile. Six of her letters have been printed in the folio edition of Anselm's works; but they are rather curious than entertaining, as affording evidence of the classical attainments of this accomplished princess, as well as her knowledge of Scripture, and her familiarity with the writings of the ancient philosophers.[2]

The first letter in the series was apparently written before king Henry's quarrel with Anselm, and for the purpose of persuading him to relax from his ascetic habits, and to follow St. Paul's comfortable advice to Timothy on the score of water drinking, with many quotations from Greek and Roman philosophers, mingled with exhortations from holy writ; from which we gather, that queen Matilda did not approve of her sickly archbishop going beyond a moderate temperance rule, and that she would not have patronised teatotalism if she had lived in these days. Her other letters to Anselm are full of lamentations for his absence, which she regarded as highly injurious to the interests of the church, and mourns over as if it were a severe personal misfortune to herself.

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[1] Gem.

[2] Anselmi Opera.

The pope addressed several letters to the king on the subject of the dispute. The first of these, which is in the tone of a paternal remonstrance, alludes to the birth of the infant Atheling in words which imply great respect for queen Matilda, and informs us how ardently Henry had wished for a son. "We have heard, too, that you have had the male issue you so much desired by your noble and religious consort." Pascal, in the course of this letter, endeavours to prevail on Henry to recall the primate, both by reasoning and persuasion. He even offers to bribe him by promises of indulgences and absolution for his sins, and those of his consort; and also to cherish the son the said noble and exemplary lady had borne to him."[1]

Henry was insensible to all these sugared words, and remained contumacious. He had fixed his affections, not on the spiritual consolations, but the rich temporalities of the church, and was determined to try how far he might go in appropriating the revenues of Canterbury to himself, without exciting an insurrectionary movement among his people. He proceeded to such lengths, that pope Pascal threatened to excommunicate him, and place the kingdom under an interdict. At a period when all the kingdoms of Christendom were supposed to be at the disposal of the Roman pontiff, and the realm of England was not only challenged, but threatened with an invasion by so formidable a competitor as Robert of Normandy, this was no light threat to Henry. It was well for him that his prudent consort Matilda enjoyed the esteem of the pope, and was on such terms with Anselm, that she could, without any sacrifice of his dignity, mediate a reconciliation with both. No one who considers the correspondence of Matilda with these personages can doubt that her politic lord availed himself of her powerful influence with both to effect a pacification, when he had found he had gone too far.

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[1] Chronicle of William of Malmesbury.

Matilda's second letter to Anselm, whilst containing an urgent entreaty for him to return, is accompanied by one from Henry himself, promising to live with him on the same amicable terms that his father the Conqueror did with archbishop Lanfranc. Henry likewise permitted his queen to compromise, in some degree, the perpetually disputed point of *congé d'élire*, in regard to preferments. Matilda declares that, "as far as in her lay," she had bestowed the appointment of Malmesbury-abbey on Ulf, a monk of Winchester; but she had left the election open to his approbation or reversal.[1] Ulf was, by his name, a Saxon compatriot, who had found favour with his gracious queen; but between the royal power and the will of the archbishop, the monks of Malmesbury were meant to exercise small portion of that liberty of choice with which the church had endowed them. Independently of the perfect conjugal unity of purpose which marks the wedded life of Matilda and her lord, she neither could nor dared have intermeddled in such weighty matters without his sanction, and those who cannot perceive the diplomatic finesse with which she carries on the treaty for her husband, understand little of the characteristics of the royal pair.

In addressing the exiled primate, Matilda offers abundant incense to his spiritual pride. She styles herself "Matilda, by the grace of God queen of England, the lowliest of the handmaidens of his holiness;"[2] and thanks him for having condescended by his letters presented to show her his mind, although he was absent. "I greet the little piece of parchment sent by you, as I would one from my father himself. I place it in my bosom near my heart: I read over and over again the words flowing from your kindness; my mind ponders them; my heart considers them. Yet, while I prize all you say, I marvel at what your wise excellency says about your nephew."[3] As the queen seems not very well to understand Anselm's allusion to his nephew, it is not possible for her biographer to explain it. However, Matilda speaks with full confidence on the possibility of her lord and master viewing ultimately the affairs of the church in the same light as she did; and she foretells, as the result of some secret consultation of which she was cognizant, evidently meaning the privy-councils of Henry the First, "that the return of the pastor to his flock, of the father to his daughter, would soon take place from the good will which," says she, "by carefully examining, I find really to exist in the heart of my lord. In truth, his mind has more friendship towards you than men think. I cultivate it, promoting whatsoever good feeling I can, in order that he may be reconciled to you. Whatsoever he may grant now in regard to your return, will be followed by further concessions when, in the future, you may see occasion to desire them. . . . . But if he should still persist in overstepping the bounds of justice, I implore from the plenitude of your charity, as the venom of rancour is not accustomed to be in you, that you turn not from him the benignity of your regard; but piously intercede with God for him, for me, and for the children that spring from us both; likewise for the people of our realm. May your holiness ever fare well."

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[1] Sancti Anselmi Epistolæ.

[2] Ibid. lib. iii. ep. xcvi.

[3] Ibid.

In the hope of averting from England and her king the threatened interdict, Matilda next addressed herself to the angry pontiff. Her letter, though partaking too much of the prolix formality of a state-paper for insertion, is very ably written; and though submissive on the whole, contains certain proof that, whomsoever might be a believer in his infallibility, she was not among the number. The very terms of her salutation contain an admonition that the attainment of the everlasting felicity she wishes him must depend on the manner in which he discharges the duties of his high vocation, for she says, "To the highest pontiff and universal pope Pascal: Matilda, by God's grace queen of the English, trusts that he will so dispense in this life the justice of the apostolical see, that he may deserve to be numbered among the apostolic conclave in the joys of perpetual peace with the companies of the just." Saintly, yet no slave of Rome, Matilda displays the high spirit of an English princess under all the elaborate terms of ceremonial lowliness in which her masterly letter is couched. She asks the pope to suspend his threatened fulmination, to give the king her lord time to effect a reconciliation with the archbishop; but follows up this prayer with an intimation, that if matters are driven to an extremity, it may cause a separation between England and the Roman see.

Duke Robert took advantage of the crisis to enter England, attended by only twelve gentlemen. Henry, having speedy information of his landing, declared, if he fell into his hands, he would keep him so closely imprisoned, that he should never give him any more trouble. "Not so, sire," replied the count de Mellent; "he is your brother, and God forbid[1] that you should do so great a villany. Let me meet and talk with him, and I will take care that he shall return quietly into Normandy, and give you acquittance of his pension withal."—"By my faith," replied the king, "I will make you do what you say." The count then mounted his horse, and encountering duke Robert on the road to Southampton, greeted him with these words: "St. Mary! what brings you into this country? Who has given you such fatal counsel? You know you have hitherto compelled the king to pay you four thousand marks a-year; and for this cause you will be taken and put to death, or detained in prison for life. He is determined to be avenged on you, I promise you."

When the duke heard this he was greatly disturbed, and asked "if he could not return to Southampton?"—"No," replied Mellent, "the king will cause you to be intercepted; but even if you could reach that place, the wind is contrary for your escape by sea."—"Counsel me," cried the duke, "what I ought to do."—"Sire," replied the count, "the queen is apprized of the news, and you know that you showed her great kindness when you gave up the assault on Winchester because she lay in childbed there. Hasten to her, and commit yourself and your people to her care, and I am sure she will guard you from all harm." Then duke Robert went to the queen, and she received and reassured him very amiably; and by the sweet words she said to him, and the fear he was in of being taken, he was induced to sacrifice those pecuniary claims on the king his brother, for which he had resigned the realm of England.

[1] Chronique de Normandie.

When Henry heard that his brother had granted an acquittance for this money to the queen, he requested her to come to him with duke Robert. Matilda, always happy to act the blessed part of a peace-maker, having introduced her brother-in-law into the presence of the king, duke Robert thus addressed him: "Fair sire, I am come to see you out of affection, and not to injure either you or yours. We are brothers, born of one father and one mother. If I am the eldest, you have the honour of a crown, which is a much better thing. I love you well, and thus it ought to be. Money and rents I seek not of you, nor ever will. I have quitted to the queen all you owe me for this kingdom. Enter we now together into perfect amity We will exchange gifts of jewels, dogs, and birds, with such things as ought to be between brothers and friends."—"We will do as you say," replied the king, "and thanks for what you have said."[1]

The Saxon chronicler and some other historians affirm, indeed, that he invaded England; "but it is plain," says sir John Hayward, "that he only came for disport and play;" that is, to recreate himself at the court of Henry Beauclerc, and to enjoy the agreeable society of the queen his god-daughter, with the music and minstrelsy in which they both so greatly delighted. Well would it have been for the luckless Robert, if all his tastes had been equally harmless and refined; but he had propensities disgraceful to his character as an individual, and ruinous to his fortunes as a prince. The chroniclers relate that he indulged in such excess of revelry while he was at the English court, that he was often in a state of inebriation for days together.[2]

From William of Malmesbury's version of the manner in which Matilda obtained the resignation of Robert's pension, it should appear that she only made an indirect insinuation of how acceptable such an addition to her queenly revenues would be, and he bestowed it upon her without a word. Our shrewd old monk, however, has very little appreciation of such chivalric munificence to a royal lady, for he drily observes, "And he, too, as if contending with Fortune whether she should give or he squander most, discovering the mere wish of the queen who silently desired it, kindly forgave the payment of this immense sum for ever, thinking it a very great matter that female pride should condescend to ask a favour, although he was her godfather." According to another historian, Robert resigned his pension to Matilda at a carouse; and when he became aware of the folly of which he had been guilty, he was greatly exasperated, and bitterly reproached his brother Henry "with having cheated and despoiled him, by employing the queen to beguile him with fair words out of his pension, when he was under the influence of wine."[1] It is certain that there was nothing but animosity between the royal brothers after this affair. In the year 1104, Henry left the government of England in the prudent hands of Matilda, and embarked for Normandy. While there, he consented to meet Anselm, the archbishop, at the castle of l'Aigle, where, through the mediation of his sister Adela, countess of Blois, a reconciliation was happily effected. Anselm then returned to England, where he was met at Dover by the queen Matilda, who received and welcomed him with the greatest demonstrations of satisfaction.[2] As the venerable primate was in feeble health, the queen took the precaution of preceding him on the road from Dover to the metropolis, providing, as she went, for his comforts and accommodation.[3]

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[1] Chronique de Normandie, 248–9.

[2] Eadmer.

The return of Anselm was attended with circumstances which gave great pain to Matilda, as an English queen. Both the king and archbishop, after their reconciliation, united in enforcing inexorably the celibacy of the Anglo-Saxon clergy, whose lower orders had previously been able to obtain licences to marry. Anselm now excommunicated all the married clergy. Two hundred of these unfortunate Saxons, barefoot, but clad in their clerical robes, encountered the king and queen in the streets of London. They implored the king's compassion: he turned from them with words of insult. They then supplicated the queen to intercede for them, but Matilda, with tears in her eyes, assured them "that she dared not interfere."[1]

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[1] Eadmer. Gem.

[2] Pascal II. admitted Anselm, the favourite priest and prelate of Matilda, to a seat near his right foot; saying, "We admit this prelate into our circle, he being, as it were, the pope of the farther hemisphere."—Godwin de Praes.

[3] Eadmer.

The year 1104 was marked by the birth of a princess, who was first named Alice, or Adelais,[2] but whose name the king afterwards changed to that of his beloved and popular queen, Matilda. This princess was afterwards the celebrated empress Matilda. "Satisfied with a child of either sex," says William of Malmesbury, "she ceased having issue; and enduring with complacency the absence of the court when the king was elsewhere employed, she continued many years at Westminster. Yet was no part of royal magnificence wanting to her, but at all times crowds of visitants and *raconteurs* came, and were entertained in her superb dwelling; for this the king's liberality commanded, this her own kindness and affability enacted. She was singularly holy, by no means despicable in point of beauty, a rival of her royal mother's piety, blameless as regarded feminine propriety, and unsullied even by suspicion. She had a singular pleasure in hearing the service of God, and on this account was thoughtlessly prodigal towards clerks of melodious voice, both in gifts and promises. Her generosity becoming universally known, crowds of scholars, equally famed for poetry and music, came over, and happy did he account himself who could soothe the ear of the queen by the novelty of his song."

Matilda's preference to foreigners in dispensing her patronage is censured by our worthy chronicler as one of her few faults. This he imputes to vanity or love of ostentation in the queen; "for," says he, "the love of fame is so rooted in the human mind, that scarcely any one is contented with the precious fruits of a good conscience, but is desirous of having their laudable actions blazed abroad. Hence it was justly observed, that the inclination crept upon the queen to reward all the foreigners she could, while the others were kept in suspense, and though sometimes rewarded, oftener tantalized with empty promises." Nor was this all; for, like a faithful annalist, Malmesbury chronicles the evil as well as the good of this illustrious lady, who, he says "fell into an error incidental to prodigal queens by rack-renting her tenants, and thus extorting from them unjustly the means of supporting her liberality to others, who had less claims to her bounty. "But whoso," pursues he, "shall judge rightly, will impute this to her servants, who, harpy-like, conveyed every thing they could gripe into their own purses, or wasted it in riotous living. Her ears being infected with the base insinuations of these people, she induced this stain on her noble mind, holy and meritorious in every other respect."[1] The profound tranquillity that subsisted in her husband's dominions during his frequent absences in Normandy, is a proof that Matilda understood the art of domestic government, and practised it with a happier effect than the two first Anglo-Norman sovereigns, whose reigns were so greatly disturbed by insurrections.

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[1] Lingard

[2] Ibid.

Henry, after his successful campaign in Normandy, returned to England, in his personal appearance at least, an altered man. The Anglo-Normans had adopted the picturesque Saxon fashion—which, however, was confined to persons of high rank—of wearing their hair long, and flowing in ringlets on their shoulders; and the king was remarkable for the luxuriance and beauty of his love-locks, which he cherished with peculiar care, no doubt out of a laudable desire to conform to the tastes of his queen, the daughter of a Saxon princess. His courtiers imitated the royal example, which gave great scandal to the Norman clergy. One day, while the king was in Normandy, he and his train entered a church, where an ecclesiastic of the name of Serlo, bishop of Seez, took up his parable on the sinfulness of this new fashion, "which," he protested, "was a device of the Evil one to bring souls into everlasting perdition; compared the moustached, bearded, and long-haired men of that age to filthy goats;"[2] and, in short, made so moving a discourse on the unloveliness of their present appearance, that the king of England and his courtiers melted into tears; on which Serlo, perceiving the impression which his eloquence had made, drew a pair of scissors out of his sleeve, and, instead of permitting their penitence to evaporate in a few unmeaning drops, persuaded his royal and noble auditors to prove the sincerity of their repentance by submitting their ringlets to his discretion, and brought his triumph to a climax by polling the king and congregation with his own hands. After Henry had thus submitted his flowing ringlets to the reforming shears of Serlo, he published an edict, commanding his subjects to follow his example.

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[1] Giles's William of Malmesbury.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis.

Henry was then courting popularity in the duchy of Normandy, and well knew that the readiest way to effect his object, was to win the good report of the monks. He had previously scandalized all piously disposed persons, by choosing for his private chaplain a priest whose only merit consisted in being able to hurry over matins and mass in half an hour. This was Roger le Poer,[1] afterwards the rich and potent bishop of Salisbury, whose hasty dispatch of the morning service so charmed Henry, that he swore aloud in the church "that he had at length met with a priest fit for a soldier." Roger, when he received this flattering commendation from the lips of royalty, was only a poor curate at Caen, but was advanced by Henry to the highest preferment in the church and state.

Queen Matilda did not long enjoy the society of her royal husband in England, and during the brief period he spent with her at Northampton, in the winter season, his whole time and thoughts were employed in raising the means for pursuing the war in Normandy. His unfortunate brother, Robert, finding himself sorely pressed on every side, and left, by his own improvident folly, without resources for continuing the contest, came over to England unattended, and, repairing to the court at Northampton, forced an interview with Henry,[2] (who was reluctant to admit him into his presence,) and earnestly besought his compassion; telling him, at the same time, "he was ready to submit every thing to his brotherly love, if he would only permit him to retain the appearance of a sovereign." As it by no means suited Henry's policy to yield to the dictates of natural affection, he coldly turned away, muttering something to himself that was unintelligible to the by-standers, and which he could not be induced to explain.

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[1] Godwin de Praes.

[2] M. Paris.

Robert's quick temper could not brook this contemptuous usage, and, in a paroxysm of rage, he indignantly assailed his brother with a storm of reproaches, mingled with abuse and menaces; and without waiting to employ the good offices of queen Matilda, through whose kindly influence it is possible he might have obtained reasonable conditions of peace, he departed from Northampton the same hour.[1]

In the spring, Henry once more committed the domestic affairs of his kingdom to the care of Matilda, and having levied an enormous tax on his subjects, to support the expenses of the war, embarked for Normandy. Matilda was principally employed, during the king's absence, in superintending the magnificent buildings at New Windsor, which were founded by Henry, and in the completion of the royal apartments in the Tower of London. She, as well as Henry, patronised Gundulph, the episcopal architect, to whom England is indebted for the most magnificent and lasting of her public buildings. Many useful public works, to which we have before alluded, furnished, under her auspices, employment for the working classes, and improved the general condition of the people.

While civilization and the arts of peace were rapidly progressing, through the beneficial influence of Matilda, at home, the arms of her royal consort were universally triumphant in Normandy. The unfortunate Robert Courthose, with his young son William, (who was called Clito, or royal heir,) with the earl of Mortaigne and all the nobles of their party, were taken prisoners at the decisive battle of Tinchebray, which was fought on the vigil of St. Michael, exactly forty years after the famous battle of Hastings. The English were much elated at this circumstance, whereby they flattered their national pride with the idea that the husband of their beloved queen, of Saxon lineage, had wiped away the dishonour of the Norman conquest, by subjugating Normandy to the yoke of England. Edgar Atheling, Matilda's uncle, was taken fighting for his friend Robert of Normandy, besides four hundred valiant knights.[2] Henry instantly released the aged prince, for love of the queen his niece, say some of the chroniclers of that period, and at her intercession settled a pension upon him for life.

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[1] Saxon Annals.

[2] W. Malmesbury.

Henry, now at the summit of his ambition, having verified the death-bed prediction of his father the Conqueror that he should unite in his own person the inheritance of both his brothers, returned triumphantly to England with his unfortunate captives. Robert he sent to Cardiff-castle, where for a time his confinement was only a sort of honourable restraint, if we may credit the account which Henry himself gives of it in a letter to the pope: "I have not," says he, "imprisoned him as an enemy; but I have placed him in a royal castle, as a noble stranger broke down with many troubles, and I supply him abundantly with every delicacy and enjoyment."

Henry and Matilda kept their Easter this year at Bath, and, during the summer, introduced the popular custom of making a royal progress through different parts of England.[1] They held their court the following year, for the first time, at New Windsor, then called, from the picturesque winding of the river Thames, Windlesore. This beautiful retreat was originally used as a hunting-seat by William the Conqueror, who, for better security of his person, converted it into a fortress or castle; but the extensive alterations and improvements which the elegant tastes of the Beauclerc sovereign and his accomplished consort Matilda of Scotland effected, first gave to Windsor-castle the magnificent and august character, as a royal residence, which has rendered it ever since a favourite abode with succeeding sovereigns.

In the year 1108, the affairs of Normandy requiring the presence of the king, another temporary separation took place between Matilda and her royal lord. Indeed, from the time that the duchy of Normandy was subjected to his sway, it became a matter of necessity, in order to preserve his popularity with his continental subjects, to pass a considerable portion of his time among them: meanwhile, the peace and integral prosperity of England were best promoted by the presence of Matilda, who formed the bond of union between Henry of Normandy and the Saxon race. Therefore it appears to have been a measure of political expediency for her to remain with her splendid court at Westminster or London, endearing herself daily more and more to the people by her works of princely charity and the public benefits which she was constantly labouring to promote. Thus we see, on accurate examination, that, contrary to the assertions of one or two paradoxical writers, who have assumed that Matilda was not treated with the affection and respect that were her due in wedded life, she enjoyed a degree of power and influence in the state perfectly unknown to the Saxon queens. She was so nobly dowered, withal, that in after reigns the highest demand ever made on the part of a queen-consort was, that she should be endowed with a dower equal to that of Matilda of Scotland.[1]

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[1] Saxon Chronicle.

By close examination of the earliest authorities, we find, that the first parliaments held by the Anglo-Norman dynasty were the fruits of the virtuous influence of this excellent queen over the mind of her husband. But as the fact, whether parliaments were ever held before the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I. has been a point of great contest among modern historians, we take leave to quote the following lines from Robert of Gloucester in support of the assertion,—first, that parliaments were held; and next, that they were held through the influence of Matilda:[2]

> "When his daughter was ten years old, to council there he drew,
> On a Whit-Sunday, a great parliament he *name* [held]
> At Westminster, noble enow, that much folk came."[3]

Piers of Langtoft distinctly points out the classes of whom Matilda advised Henry to take counsel; viz. barons, lords of towns, and burgesses. Here are the lines:—

> "Mald the good queen gave him in council
> To love all his folk and leave all his *turpeile*, [disputing,]
> To bear him with his barons that held of him their fees, [feofs,]
> And to lords of towns and burgesses of cities:
> Through council of dame Mald, a kind woman and true,
> Instead of hatred old, there now was love all new;
> Now love they full well the barons and the king,
> The king does ilk a deal at their bidding."

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[1] Tyrrell.

[2] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 430. The edition is royal octavo.

[3] Robert of Gloucester died before he completed the reign of Henry III., consequently, if the first parliament were held in that of Edward I., he could not even have mentioned such legislative assemblies without possessing the gift of prophecy.

Robert of Gloucester, from first to last, speaks of queen Matilda as an active agent in the government of England, and the restorer and upholder of the Saxon form of legislature, whose system was that of a representative constitution. He says,—

"The goodness that king Henry and the good queen Mold
Did to this land ne may never be told."

The year 1109 must have been an era of eventful interest to Matilda. Her royal husband, having spent the winter and spring in Normandy,[1] returned to England in the summer, to visit her and their infant family, and kept court with uncommon splendour in his new palace at Windsor, which had been completed in his absence. It was there that he received the ambassadors who came to solicit the hand of the princess Matilda for the emperor Henry V.[2] The proposal was eagerly accepted by Henry Beauclerc; and the princess, then just turned of five years old, was solemnly espoused by proxy to her royal suitor, who was forty years her senior; but, on account of her tender age, the infant bride was allowed for the present to remain under the care of the queen her mother.[3] The fact that Henry's numerous illegitimate children were many of them adults at this period, proves that they were born in his youth, and at all events before his marriage with Matilda of Scotland.

In the year 1109, the mighty Norman chief Fitz-Haymon, lord of Glamorgan, dying without sons, left the lady Aimabel, his young heiress, to the guardianship of the king. Henry, wishing to secure so rich a prize for his eldest natural son Robert, proposed him to his fair ward, as a suitable husband for her. But the haughty Norman damsel, though only sixteen, intrepidly replied, "That the ladies of her house were not accustomed to wed nameless persons." Then the king answered, "Neither shalt thou, damsel; for I will give my son a fair name, by which he and his sons shall be called. Robert Fitzroy shall be his name henceforth."—"But," objected the prudent heiress of Glamorgan, "a name so given is nothing. Where are the lands, and what the lordship, of the man you will me to wed, sire?"—"Truly," responded the king, with a smile, "thy question is a shrewd one, damsel: I will endow my son Robert with the lands and honours of Gloucester, and by that title shall he henceforth be called."

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[1] Saxon Annals. [2] M. Paris. Huntingdon. [3] M. Paris.

The lady Aimabel made no further demur, we are told, but wedded the king's son without delay. The fact was, the king was generously bestowing upon his son Robert the lands and honours which had been granted or sold to Fitz-Haymon, her deceased father, by William Rufus, once the patrimony of the luckless Brihtric Meaw;[1] and the young lady, who seems to have been gifted with no ordinary share of worldly wisdom, thought, no doubt, that she had better hold the lands and honours of Gloucester on the tenure of wife-service to the king's son, than lose them altogether. Such were the dealings of the Anglo-Norman sovereigns with their wards. The high-spirited heiress of Fitz-Haymon was, however, fortunate in the marriage that was thus arranged for her by her royal guardian. Robert Fitzroy was the princely earl of Gloucester who so valiantly upheld the title of his half-sister, the empress Matilda, to the English crown in the succeeding reign.

A tax of three shillings on every hide of land was levied to pay the portion of the princess Matilda, by which the sum of 824,000*l.* was raised; and the princess was sent over to her imperial husband with a magnificent retinue. She was espoused to him in the cathedral of Mentz,[2] and solemnly crowned by the archbishop of Cologne. Queen Matilda was in the next year left to keep court alone, in consequence of a formidable insurrection in Normandy in favour of William Clito, son of the unfortunate Robert Courthose, which was privately fomented by the earl of Flanders. King Henry, perceiving that all classes of his continental subjects were averse to the yoke of an absent sovereign, considered it expedient to forego the society of his queen and children for a period of nearly two years, while he held his separate state in Normandy.

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[1] See the preceding biography, and Domesday-book.

[2] Simeon of Durham.

In the year 1112, we find the king and queen[1] were together at Winchester, with their court, where they personally assisted at the removal of the bodies of Alfred the Great and his queen Alswitha from the ruinous chapel of Newminster, close to Winchester cathedral, to the magnificent abbey of Hyde,[2] founded and endowed by Henry and Matilda, as a more suitable shrine for the relics of their illustrious progenitor,—from whom, be it remembered, Henry, as well as his Saxon queen, was descended in the eighth generation, through the marriage of Elstrith, the daughter of Alfred, with an earl of Flanders, his maternal ancestor. Here, too, the bones of Edward the Elder and his queen, the immediate ancestors of Matilda, were at the same time translated.[3] The following year Henry was again in Normandy, where he entered into an amicable treaty with one of his most troublesome enemies, Fulk earl of Anjou, by a matrimonial alliance between his heir, prince William, and Alice, the daughter of that earl.

The education of Matilda's eldest daughter being considered as completed in 1114, the marriage was fully solemnized between her and the emperor Henry V., and they were both crowned a second time, with great pomp, in the cathedral at Mentz. The young empress was then only in her twelfth year. Notwithstanding this great disparity in age, it appears that the youthful bride enjoyed a reasonable share of happiness with her mature consort, by whom she was treated with the greatest indulgence, while her great beauty and majestic carriage won the hearts of the German princes, and obtained for her unbounded popularity.

Matilda's eldest son, prince William, (or the Atheling, as he was more generally styled by the English,) was, in the year 1115, conducted by the king his father with great pomp into Normandy, where he was presented to the states as the heir of the duchy, and fealty was sworn to him by the barons and freemen. This prince was then only twelve years old. He returned with his royal father to England in July, and the following year Henry summoned that memorable parliament, mentioned by Holinshed as the first held since the Norman conquest, to meet at Salisbury, and there appointed the young prince as his successor. William of Malmesbury says, "Every freeman of England and Normandy, of whatsoever degree, or to whatsoever lord his vassal service was due, was made to perform homage, and swear fealty to William, son of king Henry and queen Matilda." The Easter festival was kept this year by the royal family at Odiham-castle, in Hampshire.

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[1] Archæologia.

[2] Henry VIII. brutally desecrated the place where reposed the remains of these patriot sovereigns. Englishmen of the eighteenth century, more barbarous still, converted the holy fane into a bridewell, and the bones of Alfred were by felon hands exhumed and dispersed.

[3] Archæologia.

Matilda passed the Christmas festival of the same year, in the company of her royal husband, at the abbey of St. Alban's.[1] They were the guests of abbot Richard, who had then brought to a happy conclusion the building of that magnificent fabric. He invited the queen, who was one of its benefactresses, the king, and the archbishop of Rouen, and many prelates and nobles, to assist at the consecration of the abbey, which took place Christmas-day, 1115. The royal pair, with their suite of nobles and ladies, were lodged in the abbey, and entertained from December 25th to January 6th. The queen, sanctioned by Henry, gave, by charter, two manors to St. Alban's. The existence of a portrait of queen Matilda is certainly owing to this visit; for in a rich illuminated volume, called the Golden Book of St. Alban's, (now in the British Museum,) may still be seen a miniature of the royal benefactress.[2] The queen is attired in the royal mantle of scarlet, lined with white fur; it covers the knees, and is very long. The mantle is square to the bust. A cordon of scarlet and gold, with a large tassel, passes through two gold knobs: she holds the cordon in her left hand. She wears a tight kirtle of dark blue, buttoned down the front with gold. Her sleeves fit close to the arms, and are scarlet like the mantle. A white veil is arranged in a square form on the brow, and is surmounted by a gold crown, formed of three large trefoils, and gold *oreillettes* appear beneath the veil on each side of the cheeks. The veil flows behind her shoulders with lappets. Matilda is very fair in complexion: she has a long throat, and elegant form of tall proportions. She displays with her right hand the charter she gave the abbey, from which hangs a very large red seal, whereon, without doubt, was impressed her effigy in grand relief. She sits on a carved stone bench, on which is a scarlet cushion figured with gold leaves. This cushion is in the form of a woolpack, but has four tassels of gold and scarlet. A piece of figured cloth is hung at the back of her seat. There are no armorial bearings,—one proof of the authenticity of the portrait. "Queen Matildis gave us Bellwick and Lilleburn," is the notation appended by the monks of St. Alban's to this portrait.

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[1] Newcome's History of St. Alban's, pp. 52, 93.

[2] Cottonian MSS. Nero, D, 7. A beautiful and accurate copy from the original has been drawn by M. Kearney at the expense of Henry Howard, esq., of Corby, the descendant of Matilda, and presented by him to the authors of this work. It corrects, in many particulars, the errors of an engraving published by Strutt. We have the opportunity, in this new edition, of describing Matilda's portrait from an examination of the Golden Book itself, from which Mr. Harding, the celebrated antiquarian artist, has made our accompanying illustration. The Golden Book of St. Alban's is a sort of conventual album, in which were entered the portraits of all the benefactors of the abbey, together with an abstract of their donations. Five different artists, of various degrees of merit, may be traced in this collection. Some of the miniatures are exquisitely designed and coloured, others are barbarous and puerile in their execution; some of the portraits are represented holding well-filled purses, others displaying the charters, with large pendant seals, which

About this period, the stately new palace at Woodstock being completed, and the noble park, reckoned the finest at that time in England, having been walled round, Henry stocked it with a curious menagerie of wild beasts, the first zoological collection ever seen in this country. It is described in very quaint terms by Stowe, who says, "The king craved

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secured broad lands to church and poor. It is true that Matilda's portrait was not entered till the fourteenth century, when the book was first commenced; but the style of dress, together with the form of the throne on which the queen is seated, prove that the original design was drawn in the queen's own day; for the artists of the middle ages drew only what they saw, and had the limner been inclined to give a supposititious portrait of queen Matilda, he would have designed her figure clad in the costume of Edward the Third's era, and seated in the high-backed gothic chair of state on which royal persons were enthroned since the days of Edward I., as may be seen by reference to any collection of engravings from regal seals; instead of which, Matilda is seen seated on the primitive stone bench of Anglo-Saxon royalty, represented on the seals of the Anglo-Norman and early Plantagenet monarchs.

from other kings lions, leopards, lynxes, and camels, and other curious beasts, of which England hath none. Among others, there was a strange animal called a stryx, or porcupine, sent him by William of Montpelier; which beast," says the worthy chronicler, "is, among the Africans, counted as a kind of hedgehog, covered with pricking bristles, which they shoot out naturally on the dogs that pursue them."

Unbounded hospitality was one of the social virtues of this peaceful reign,[1] especially at this peculiar era, when the benignant example of the good queen had, for a period of nearly seventeen years, produced the happiest effect in softening the manners of the haughty and powerful chieftains who were at that time the magnates of the land. The Norman families, at this period, were beginning to practise some of the peaceful pursuits of the Anglo-Saxons, and ladies of high rank considered it no infringement on the dignity of their station to attend to the profitable concerns of the poultry-yard and the dairy. The countess Constance of Chester, though the wife of Hugh Lupus, the king's first cousin, kept a herd of kine, and made good Cheshire cheeses, three of which she presented to the archbishop of Canterbury. Giraldus Cambriensis bears honourable testimony to the excellence of the produce of the 'cheese-shire' in that day.

A fresh revolt in Normandy[2] deprived Matilda of the society of her husband and son in 1117. The king, according to Eadmer, returned and spent Christmas with her, as she was at that time in a declining state of health;[3] leaving prince William with his Norman baronage, as a pledge for his return.[4] His sojourn was, of necessity, very brief. He was compelled by the distracted state of affairs in Normandy to rejoin his army there,—Matilda never saw either her husband or her son again.

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[1] The following verses from an ancient MS., quoted by Collins, affords an interesting witness of this fact. They were inscribed by sir William Fitz-William, the lord of Sprotborough, on an ancient cross, which was demolished at the Reformation:—

"Whoso is hungry, and lists well to eat,
Let him come to Sprotborough to his meat;
And for a night and a day
His horse shall have both corn and hay,
And no one shall ask him, 'when he goeth away?'"

[2] Ordericus Vitalis. [3] Saxon Annals. [4] Eadmer, p. 118; see Rapin, vol. i. 199.

Resigned and perfect in all the duties of her high calling, the dying queen remained, during this trying season, in her palace at Westminster,[1] lonely though surrounded with all the splendour of royalty; enduring with patience the separation from her beloved consort and children, and affording, to the last hour of her life, a beautiful example of piety and self-denial. She expired on the 1st of May, 1118,[2] passionately lamented by every class of the people, to whom her virtues and wisdom had rendered her inexpressibly dear.

According to the most ancient chroniclers, the king her husband was much afflicted when the intelligence of Matilda's death reached him, amidst the turmoil of battle and siege in Normandy.[3] Piers of Langtoft alludes to the grief felt by the royal widower, at the loss of his amiable consort, in terms of the most homely simplicity :—

> "Now is the king sorry, her death doth him *gram*," [grieve.]

Hardyng's rhyming Chronicle produces the following quaint stanzas on the death of Matilda, and the sorrow of king Henry for her loss :—

> "The year of Christ a thousand was full clear,
> One hundred eke and therewithal eighteen,
> When good queen Maude was dead and laid on bier,
> At Westminster buryed, as well was seen;
> For heaviness of which the king, I ween,
> To Normandy then went with his son
> The duke William, and there with him did won."

Hardyng is, however, mistaken in supposing that Henry was with his beloved consort at the time of her decease. The same chronicler gives us another stanza on the death of Henry, in which he, in yet more positive terms, speaks of the conjugal affection which united the Norman sovereign to his Saxon queen :—

> "Of Christe's date was there a thousand year,
> One hundred also, and nine and thirty mo,
> Buried at Redynge, as well it doth appear,

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[1] William of Malmesbury.
[2] Saxon Annals.
[3] Robert of Gloucester

In the abbye which there he founded so,
Of monkes black, whenever they ride or go,
That pray for him and queen Maude his wife,
Who either other loved withouten strife."

Another chronicler says, "Nothing happened to trouble the king, save the death of his queen Matilda, the very mirror of piety, humility, and princely bounty."[1]

The same causes that had withheld the king from attending Matilda in her dying illness, prevented him from honouring her obsequies with his presence. Matilda was buried on St. Philip's-day in Westminster-abbey, on the right side of her royal uncle, Edward the Confessor.[2] Great disputes, however, have existed as to the place of her interment,[3] which has been contested with almost as much zeal as was displayed by the seven cities of Greece, in claiming the honour of having given birth to Homer. The monks of Reading averred that their royal patroness was buried in her own stately abbey there, where her illustrious consort was afterwards interred. The rhyming chroniclers insist that she was buried in St. Paul's cathedral, and that her epitaph was placed in Westminster-abbey. These are the words of Piers of Langtoft,—

"At London, in St. Paul's, in tomb she is laid,
Christ, then, of her soul have mercie:
If any one will *witten* [know] of her storie,
At Westminster it is written *readily*;"

that is to say, so that it may be plainly read. Tyrrell declares that she was buried at Winchester, but that tablets to her memory were set up in many churches,—an honour which she shares with queen Elizabeth. The following passage from Weever testifies that the mortal remains of Matilda, 'the good queen,' repose near the relics of her royal uncle, Edward the Confessor, in the solemn temple founded by that last Saxon monarch, and which had been completed under her careful superintendence. "Here lieth in Westminster-abbey, without any tomb, Matilda or Maud, daughter of Malcolm Canmore, king of Scots, and wife of Henry I. of England, who brought to him children, William, Richard, and

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[1] Florence of Worcester.

[2] Pennant's London. Robert of Gloucester.

[3] According to Stowe, her grave was in the vestry of the abbey.

Mary, who perished by shipwreck, and likewise Maud, who was wife to Henry, the fifth emperor. She died the first day of May, 1118."[1] She had an excellent epitaph made to her commendation, whereof four lines only remain :- -

"Prospera non laetam fecere, nec aspera tristem,
Aspera risus erant, prospera terror erant;
Non decor efficit fragilem, non sceptra superbam,
Sola potens humilis, sola pudica decens."

Henry of Huntingdon, the chronicler, no mean poet, was the author of these Latin lines, of which the following is a faithful version :—

"Prosperity could not inflate her mind,
Lowly in greatness, as in ills resigned:
Beauty deceived not, nor did crowns efface
Her best adornment, woman's modest grace."

William of Malmesbury, speaking of the death of Matilda of Scotland, says, "She was snatched away from her country, to the great loss of her people, but to her own advantage; for her funeral being splendidly solemnized at Westminster, she entered into her rest, and her spirit manifested, by no trifling indications, that she was a resident in heaven." Some attempts, we suppose, therefore, must have been made by the monks of Westminster to establish for this great and good queen a deceptive posthumous fame, by the testimony of miracles performed at her tomb, or pretended revelations from her spirit to her contemporaries in the flesh. Our marvellous chronicler, however, confines himself to the above significant hints, and takes his leave of Matilda in these words: "She died willingly, leaving the throne after a reign of seventeen years and six months, experiencing the fate of her family, who all died in the flower of their age."

Many curious remains still exist of the old palace in Westminster, where Matilda kept state as queen, and ended her life. This venerable abode of our early sovereigns was originally built by Canute, and, being devastated by fire, was rebuilt by Edward the Confessor with such enduring solidity, that antiquaries still point out different portions which were indubitably the work of the royal Saxon, and therefore must have formed part of the residence of his niece. Part of the old palace of Westminster is still to be seen in the buildings near Cotton-garden, and the lancet-shaped windows about Old Palace-yard are declared to appertain to it.[1] Cotton-garden was the private garden of the ancient palace, and therefore belonged especially to queen Matilda. It would be idle to dwell on Westminster-hall and Westminster-abbey, though the original sites of both were included in the precincts of this palace, because one was rebuilt from the ground by Richard II., and the other by Henry III. Great devastation was made in the royal abode of the Anglo-Saxon queen, by the late disastrous conflagration of the house of lords and its adjacent apartments, which all belonged to it.

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[1] Weever's Funeral Monuments.

The house of lords was an antique oblong room; it was the hall of state of Matilda's palace, and called *the* white-hall, but without any reference to the vast palace of Whitehall, to which the seat of English royalty was transferred in the reign of Henry VIII. As the Painted-chamber, still entire, is well known to have been the bedchamber of Edward the Confessor, and the apartment in which he expired,[2] there can be no doubt but that it was the state bedchamber of his niece. A curious room in Cotton-house was the private oratory of the Confessor, and was assuredly used by Matilda for the same purpose; while at the south end of the court of Requests are to be seen two mighty arches, the zig-zag work of which ranks its architecture among the most ancient existing in our country. This was once a deserted state-chamber[3] of the royal Saxon palace, but it has been used lately by the house of commons.

There is a statue of Matilda in Rochester cathedral, which forms the pilaster to the west door; that of king Henry, her husband, forms another. The hair of the queen depends over either shoulder, in two long plaits, below the knees. Her garments are long and flowing, and she holds an open scroll of parchment in her hand. Her features are defaced, and indeed so completely broken away, that no idea of what manner of countenance she had can be gathered from the remains.

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[1] Pennant.

[2] Howell.

[3] The appellation of court of Requests has no reference to modern legal proceedings. It was the feudal court of the high steward of England. It was used by the house of commons after the destruction of St. Stephen's chapel, while the lords obtained possession of the Painted-chamber.

King Henry proved the sincerity of his regard for Matilda, by confirming all her charters after her death. Madox, in his History of the Exchequer, quotes one of that monarch's charters, reciting "that he had confirmed to the priory of the Holy Trinity in London the grant of his queen Matilda, for the good of her soul, of 25*l.* on the farm of the city of Exeter, and commands his chief justiciar and the barons of his exchequer to constrain the sheriff of Devonshire to pay the same to the said canons."[1]

Matilda's household was chiefly composed of Saxon ladies, if we may trust the evidence of Christian names. The maids of honour were Emma, Gunilda, and Christina, pious ladies and full of alms-deeds, like their royal mistress. After the death of the queen, these ladies retired to the hermitage of Kilburn, near London, where there was a holy well, or medicinal spring. This was changed into a priory[2] in 1128, as the deed says, "for the reception of these three virgins of God, sacred damsels who had belonged to the chamber of Matilda, the good queen-consort to Henry I."[3]

History only particularizes two surviving children of Matilda of Scotland and Henry I.; but Gervase, the monk of Canterbury, says she had, besides William and the empress Matilda, a son named Richard. Hector Boethius mentions a daughter of hers, named Euphemia. The Saxon Chronicle and Robert of Gloucester both speak of her second son Richard, and Piers of Langtoft says, "The two princes, her sons, were both in Normandy when Matilda died." Prince William the Atheling was destined to see England no more. During the remainder of the year 1118 he was fighting, by his father's side, against the invading force of the king of

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[1] Charter Antiq. Nn. 16.

[2] On its site are a public-house and tea-gardens, now called Kilburn-Wells.

[3] The original deed, preserved in the Cottonian MSS. Claudius. The appellation given to their office, *domicella*, proves their rank was noble, as this word will be seen applied even to the daughters of emperors.

France and the partisans of his cousin William Clito. On one occasion, when the noble war-horse and its rich caparisons belonging to that gallant but unfortunate prince, having been abandoned during a hasty retreat, were captured, and Henry presented this prize to his darling heir, the noble youth generously sent them back, with a courteous message, to his rival kinsman and namesake.[1] His royal father, king Henry, did not disdain to imitate the magnanimous conduct of his youthful son after the memorable battle in which the standard of France was taken: when the favourite charger of Louis le Gros fell into his hands, he returned it to the French monarch the next day.

The king of France, as *suzerain* of Normandy, at the general pacification required of Henry the customary homage for his feof. This the victorious monarch considered derogatory to the dignity of a king of England to perform, and therefore deputed the office to prince William, who was then invested with the duchy, and received the oath of fealty from the states.[2] The prince solemnly espoused his betrothed bride Alice, the daughter of Fulk earl of Anjou, June 1119. King Henry changed her name to Matilda, out of respect, it is said, for the memory of his mother; but more probably from a tender regard for his deceased consort, Matilda of Scotland, the love of his youth, and the mother of his children. The marriage was celebrated at Lisieux,[3] in the county of Burgundy; and the prince remained in Normandy with his young bride, attended by all the youthful nobility of England and the duchy, passing the time gaily with feasts and pageants till the 25th of November, in the year 1120; when king Henry (who had been nearly two years absent from his kingdom) proceeded with him and an illustrious retinue to Barfleur,[4] where the king and his heir embarked for England the same night, in separate ships.

Fitz-Stephen, the captain of the 'Blanche Nef,' (the finest vessel in the Norman navy,) demanded the honour of conveying the heir of England home, because his father had commanded the Mora, the ship which brought William the Conqueror to the shores of England. His petition was granted; and the prince, with his gay and splendid company, entered the fatal bark with light hearts, and commenced their voyage with mirth and minstrelsy. The prince incautiously ordered three casks of wine to be given to the ship's crew; and the mariners were, in consequence, for the most part intoxicated when they sailed, about the close of day. Prince William, who was desirous of overtaking the rest of the fleet, pressed Fitz-Stephen to crowd his sails, and put out his sweeps. Fitz-Stephen, having named the 'white ship' as the swiftest galley in the world, to make good his boast and oblige his royal passenger, caused his men to stretch with all their might to the oars, and did every thing to accelerate the speed of his light bark. While the 'Blanche Nef' was rushing through the water with the most dangerous velocity, she suddenly struck on a rock, called the 'Catte-raze,' with such impetuosity, that she started several planks, and began to sink. All was instant horror and confusion. The boat was, however, let down, and the young heir of England, with several of his youthful companions, got into it, and having cleared the ship, might have reached the Norman shore in safety; but the cries of his illegitimate sister, Matilda countess of Perche, who distinctly called on him by name for succour, moving him with a tender impulse of compassion, he commanded the boat back to take her in. Unfortunately, the moment it neared the ship, such numbers sprang into it, that it instantly sank with its precious freight; all on board perished, and of the three hundred persons who embarked in the 'white ship,' but one soul escaped to tell the dismal tale. This person was a poor butcher of Rouen, named Berthould, who climbed to the top of the mast, and was the next morning rescued by some fishermen. Fitz-Stephen, the master of the luckless 'white ship,' was a strong mariner, and stoutly supported himself for some hours in the water, till he saw Berthould on the mast, and calling to him, asked if the boat with the heir of England had escaped; but when the butcher, who had witnessed the whole catastrophe, replied "that all were drowned and dead," the strong man's force failed him; he ceased to battle with the waves, and sank to rise no more.[1]

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[1] Holinshed.
[2] Ordericus Vitalis. Tyrrell.
[3] Saxon Annals.
[4] Ordericus Vitalis.

The report of this disaster reached England the next day. Theobald of Blois, the king's nephew, was the first who heard it; but he dared not inform his uncle of the calamity which had rendered his house desolate. The Saxon chronicler says, there perished another son of Henry and Matilda, named Richard, and also Richard, a natural son of the king; Matilda, his natural daughter, countess of Perche; Richard earl of Chester, his cousin, with his bride, the young lady Lucy of Blois, daughter of Henry's sister Adela, and the flower of the juvenile nobility, who are mentioned by the Saxon chronicler as a multitude of "incomparable folk."

King Henry had reached England with his fleet in safety, and for three days was permitted to remain in a state of the most agonizing suspense and uncertainty respecting the fate of his children. No one choosing to become the bearer of such evil tidings, at length Theobald de Blois, finding it could no longer be concealed, instructed a favourite little page to communicate the mournful news to the bereaved father; and the child, entering the royal presence with a sorrowful step, knelt down at Henry's feet, and told him that the prince and all on board the 'white ship' were lost. The great Henry was so thunderstruck with this dreadful news, that he staggered and sank upon the floor in a deep swoon, in which state he remained for many hours. When he recovered, he broke into the bitterest lamentations, magnifying at the same time the great qualities of his heir and the loss he had sustained; and the chroniclers all agree that he was never again seen to smile.[2] The body of prince William was never found, though diligent search was made for it along the shores. It was regarded as an augmentation of the calamity, that his delicate form, instead of receiving Christian burial, became a prey to the monsters of the deep.[1]

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[1] Thierry's Anglo-Normans.

[2] King Henry's grief for the loss of his heir did not prevent him from endeavouring to make some advantage of it in a worldly point of view, by wrongfully detaining the dower of his young widow, who had escaped the fate of the unfortunate prince, by sailing in the king's ship instead of the fatal 'Blanche Nef.' She returned to her father, Fulk earl of Anjou, and remaining constant to the memory of William the Atheling, was veiled a nun in the abbey of Fontevraud. The earl of Anjou was so highly exasperated at the detention of her appanage, that he immediately gave her sister in marriage to William Clito, the son of Robert of Normandy, and assisted him to assert his claims against Henry.—Malmesbury's Chronicles.

It is Henry of Huntingdon who exults so uncharitably over the catastrophe of the 'white ship,' in the following burst of poetic eloquence:—"The proud youth! he thought of his future reign, when he said 'he would yoke the Saxons like oxen.' But God said, 'It shall not be, thou impious one; it shall not be.' And so it has come to pass: that brow has worn no crown of gold, but has been dashed against the rocks of the ocean. It was God himself who would not that the son of the Norman should again see England."[2]

In the last act of his life, William Atheling manifested a spirit so noble, so tenderly compassionate, and forgetful of selfish considerations, that we can only say it was worthy of the son of Matilda, the good queen.[3]

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[1] William of Malmesbury.

[2] Brompton also speaks unfavourably of this unfortunate young prince; but it should be remembered that England was a divided nation at that period, and that the Saxon chroniclers wrote in the very gall of bitterness against those whom the Norman historians commended. Implicit credence is not to be given to the assertions of either. It is only by reading both, and carefully weighing and collating facts, that the truth is to be elicited.

[3] Matilda's only surviving child, the empress Matilda, thus became king Henry's heiress-presumptive. She was the first female who claimed the regal office in England. The events of her life are so closely interwoven with those of the two succeeding queens, Adelicia, and Matilda of Boulogne, her royal contemporaries, that to avoid the tedium of repetition, and also to preserve the chronological stream of history in unbroken unity, which is an important object, we must refer our readers to the lives of those queens for the personal history of this princess, from whom her present majesty queen Victoria derives her title to the crown of England.

ADELICIA OF LOUVAINE,

SURNAMED THE FAIR MAID OF BRABANT;

SECOND QUEEN OF HENRY I.

Adelicia's beauty—Imperial descent from Charlemagne—Standard embroidered by Adelicia—Preserved at Liege—Adelicia sought in marriage by Henry I.—Richly dowered—Embarks for England with Henry—King and queen parishioners of archbishop of Canterbury—Violence of archbishop—He crowns Adelicia—Eulogies on her beauty—Her prudence—Encouragement of literature—Empress Matilda—Adelicia childless—Empress Matilda kept in Adelicia's chamber—Difficult position of the queen—Friendship with her step-daughter—Second marriage of the empress—Adelicia's conjugal virtues—Matilda returns to England—Remains with the queen—Birth of prince Henry—Death of king Henry—Adelicia's respect for his memory—Her troubadour writes king Henry's life—Her second marriage—William Albini—Her dowry—Palace—Receives empress Matilda—Message to king Stephen—Conjugal happiness of Adelicia—Her charter—Her portrait—Her children—Charitable foundations at Arundel—Her younger brother abbot of Affligham—Adelicia retires to Affligham nunnery, in Flanders—Dies there—Record of her death—Buried—Her issue by Albini—Adelicia ancestor of two of our queens.

THIS princess, to whom contemporary chroniclers have given the name of "the fair Maid of Brabant," is one of the most obscure characters in the illustrious catalogue of English queens. Tradition, and her handmaid Poetry, have, however, spoken bright things of her; and the surviving historical records of her life, though brief, are all of a nature tending to confirm the good report which the verses of the Provençals have preserved of her virtues and accomplishments.

Descended, through both her parents, from the imperial Carlovingian line,[1] Adelicia boasted the most illustrious blood

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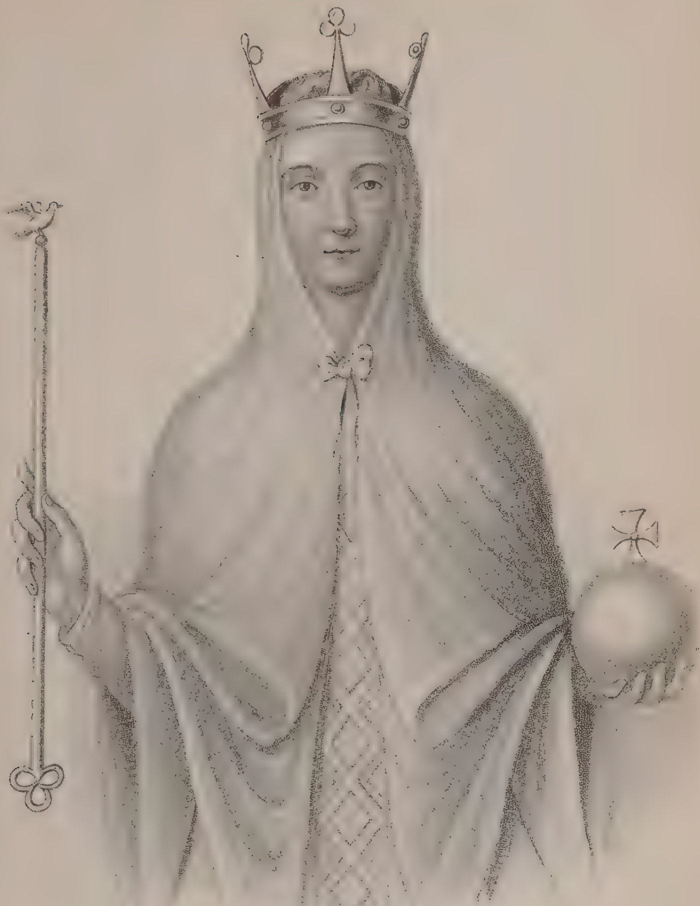
[1] Howard Memorials.



in Christendom. She was the eldest daughter of Godfrey of Louvaine, duke of Brabant and Lotheir (or Lower Lorraine), and Ida countess of Namur.[1] Her father, as the great-grandson of Charles, brother to Lothaire of France, was the lawful representative of Charlemagne. The male posterity of the unfortunate Charles having been cut off by Hugh Capet, the rights of his house became vested in the descendants of his eldest daughter, Gerberga.[2] Lambert, the son of Gerberga, by her marriage with Robert of Louvaine, was the father of Godfrey. Ermengarde, the second daughter of Charles, married Albert, the third count of Namur: and their sole daughter and heiress, Ida (the mother of Adelicia) became the wife of her cousin, Godfrey of Louvaine, surnamed Barbatus, or 'the bearded,' because he had made a vow never to shave his beard till he had recovered Lower Lorraine, the patrimony of his ancestors. In this he succeeded in the year 1107, after which he triumphantly displayed a smooth chin, in token that he had fulfilled his obligation. He finally obtained from his subjects and contemporaries the more honourable appellation of Godfrey the Great.[3] The dominions of this prince were somewhat more extensive than the modern kingdom of Belgium, and were governed by him with the greatest wisdom and ability.

From this illustrious lineage Adelicia inherited the distinguished beauty and fine talents for which the Lorraine branch of the house of Charlemagne has ever been celebrated. She was also remarkable for her proficiency in feminine acquirements. A standard which she embroidered in silk and gold for her father, during the arduous contest in which he was engaged for the recovery of his patrimony, was celebrated throughout Europe for the exquisite taste and skill displayed by the royal Adelicia in the design and execution of her patriotic achievement.[4] This standard was unfortunately captured at a battle near the castle of Duras, in the year 1129, by the bishop of Liege and the earl of Limbourg, the old competitor of Godfrey for Lower Lorraine: it was placed by them, as a memorial of their triumph, in the great church of St. Lambert, at Liege, and was for centuries carried in procession on Rogation-days through the streets of that city The church of St. Lambert was destroyed during the French revolution; yet the learned editor of the Howard Memorials fondly indulges in the hope that this interesting relic of his royal ancestress's industry and patriotic feelings may yet exist, destined, perhaps, hereafter to be brought to light, like the long-forgotten Bayeux tapestry. The plain, where this memorable trophy was taken, is still called 'the field of the Standard.'[1]

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[1] Betham's Genealogical Tables. Buknet, or Bukein's, Trophées du Brabant. Howard's Memorials of the Howard Family.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Buknet's Trophies. Howard Memorials.

[4] Ibid.

The fame of the fair maid of Brabant's charms and accomplishments, it is said, induced the confidential advisers of Henry I. of England to recommend their sorrow-stricken lord to wed her, in hopes of dissipating that corroding melancholy which, since the loss of his children in the fatal 'white ship,' had become constitutional to him. The temper of this monarch had, in fact, grown so irascible, that his greatest nobles feared to enter his presence, and it is said that, in his causeless transports of rage, he indulged himself in the use of the most unkingly terms of vituperation to all who approached him;[2] which made his peers the more earnest in their counsels for him to take a second wife. Adelicia of Louvaine was the object of his choice. Henry's ostensible motive in contracting this marriage was the hope of male posterity, to inherit the united realms of England and Normandy.[3] He had been a widower two years when he entered into a treaty with Godfrey of Louvaine for the hand of his beautiful daughter. Robert of Gloucester, when recording the fact in his rhyming Chronicle, says,

> "He knew no woman so fair as she
> Was seen on middle earth."

The name of this princess has been variously written by the chroniclers of England, Normandy, Germany, and Brabant, as Adeliza, Alicia, Adelaide, Aleyda or Adelheite, which means 'most noble.' In the Saxon Chronicle she is called Æthelice, or Alice. Mr. Howard of Corby-castle, the immediate descendant of this queen, in his Memorials of the Howard Family,[1] calls her Adelicia, for the best of reasons,—her name is so written in an original charter of the 31st of Henry I., confirming her grant of lands for the foundation of an hospital of lepers at Fugglestone, near Wilton, dedicated to St. Giles; which deed, with part of the seal-appendant, is still preserved in the corporation chest at Wilton.

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[1] Brutsholme.

[2] Speed. Rapin.

[3] "It was the death of this youth," says William of Malmesbury, speaking of the death of the Atheling, "which induced king Henry to renounce the celibacy he had cherished since Matilda's death, in the hope of future heirs by a new consort."

The Provençal and Walloon poets, of whom this queen was a munificent patroness, style her Alix la Belle, Adelais, and Alise, varying the syllables according to the structure of the verses which they composed in her honour,—a licence always allowed to poetical writers; therefore the rhymes of the troubadours ought not to be regarded as the slightest authority in settling the point. Modern historians generally speak of this princess by her Latinized name of Adeliza, but her learned descendant's version of her name is that which ought to be adopted by her biographer. There is no authentic record of the date of Adelicia's birth. Mr. Howard supposes she was about eighteen years old at the period of her marriage with Henry I., and it is certain that she was in the bloom of her beauty at the time he sought her hand.

In proportion to the estimation in which the charms of Adelicia were held did Henry fix her dower, which was so munificent, that the duke of Louvaine, her father, scrupled not to consign her to her affianced lord, as soon as the contract of marriage was signed. This ceremony took place on the 16th of April, 1120, but the nuptials were not celebrated till some months after this period. King Henry, in person, conducted his betrothed bride to England in the autumn of this year.[2] They landed about Michaelmas. Some historians affirm that the royal pair were married at Ely, soon after their arrival; but if so, it must have been a private arrangement, for the nuptials were publicly solemnized at Windsor on the 24th of January, 1121;[1] having been delayed in consequence of a singular dispute between the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Salisbury, which established a point too important to be omitted in a history embracing, in a peculiar manner, the habits and customs of royalty. Roger le Poer, the bishop of Salisbury, that notable preacher of short sermons, claimed the right to marry the royal pair because the fortress of Windsor was within his diocese. This right was disputed by the aged Ralph, archbishop of Canterbury, who was a great stickler for the prerogatives of his office; and an ecclesiastical council was called, in which it was decided, that wherever the king and queen might be within the realm of England, they were the parishioners of the archbishop of Canterbury. Accordingly, the ceremony was triumphantly performed by the venerable primate, though bowed down by so many infirmities, that he appeared like one tottering on the verge of the grave.

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[1] Through the courtesy of his grace the late duke of Norfolk, I have been favoured with a copy of this inestimable volume, which, as it is printed for private use, is inaccessible to the public, but is most important as a book of reference to the writers of royal and noble biographies.

[2] Henry of Huntingdon. White Kennet.

This afforded Henry an excuse for deputing the honour of crowning him and his bride on the following day, at Westminster, to his favourite prelate Roger le Poer, the bishop of Salisbury above named, to console him for his disappointment with regard to the hymeneal office. But the archbishop was not to be thus put off. The right of crowning the king and queen he considered a still more important branch of his archiepiscopal prerogatives than that of marrying them, and, *malgré* his age and paralysis, he hastened to the abbey, where the ceremonial had commenced at an unusually early hour. Roger le Poer, his rival, having, according to his old custom, made unprecedented expedition in the performance of his office, had already placed the royal diadem on the monarch's brow, when archbishop Ralph sternly approached the royal chair, and asked Henry, "Who had put the crown on his head?"[2] The king evasively replied, "If the ceremony had not been properly performed, it could be done again." On which, as some chroniclers assert, the choleric old primate gave the king such a smart blow with his crosier, that he smote the crown from his head;[1] but Eadmer says, he only raised it up by the strap which passed under the chin, and so turned it off his head. He then proceeded to replace it with all due form, and afterwards crowned the fair young queen. This most extraordinary coronation took place on Sunday, January 30th, 1121.

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[1] Eadmer.

[2] Eadmer. Speed.

The beauty of the royal bride, whom Piers of Langtoft calls

"The May withouten vice,"

made a great impression on the minds of the people, which the sweetness of her manners, her prudence, and mild virtues, strengthened in no slight degree. It was on the occasion of her bridal coronation that Henry of Huntingdon, the chronicler, addressed to Adelicia those celebrated Latin verses, of which Camden has given us the following translation:[2]

"When Adeliza's name should grace my song,
A sudden wonder stops the Muse's tongue;
Your crown and jewels, when compared to you,
How poor your crown, how pale your jewels show!
Take off your robes, your rich attire remove,
Such pomps may load you, but can ne'er improve;
In vain your costly ornaments are worn,
You they obscure, while others they adorn.
Ah! what new lustres can these trifles give,
Which all their beauty from your charms receive?
Thus I your lofty praise, your vast renown,
In lowly verse am not ashamed to have shown,
Oh, be you not ashamed my services to own!"

The wisdom of this lovely girl-queen early manifested itself in the graceful manner by which she endeavoured to conform herself to the tastes of her royal lord, in the encouragement of the polished arts, and the patronage of literature. Henry's love for animals had induced him to create an extensive menagerie at Woodstock, as we have seen, during the life of his first queen, Matilda of Scotland, who was probably well acquainted with natural history. The youthful Adelicia evidently knew nothing of zoology previously to her marriage with Henry Beauclerc; but, like a good wife, in order to adapt herself to his pursuits, she turned her attention to that study, for we find Philippe de Thuan wrote a work on the nature of animals for her especial instruction. The poetical naturalist did not forget to allude to the personal charms of his royal patroness in his courtier-like dedication:—

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[1] Speed.

[2] "Anglorum regina, tuos Adelida, decores,
Ipsa referre parans Musa stupor riget.
Quid diadema tibi pulcherrima? quid tibi gemmæ?
Pallet gemma tibi, nec diadema nitet.
Deme tibi cultus, cultum natura ministrat
Non exornari forma beata potest
Ornamenta cave, nec quicquam luminis inde
Accipis; illa micant lumine clara tuo,
Non puduit modicas de magnis dicere laudes
Ne pudeat dominam, te precor, esse meam."

"Philippe de Thuan, en Franceise raisun,
Ad estrait bestaire un livre de grammaire,
Pour lour d'une feme ki mult est belle,
Alix est namée, reine est corunée,
Reine est d'Engleterre, sa ame nait ja guere."

"Philippe de Thuan, in plain French,
Has written an elementary book of animals,
For the praise and instruction of a good and beauteous woman,
Who is the crowned queen of England, and named Alix."

One of the most approved historians of her day, the author of the Waltham-abbey MSS.,[1] states that he was appointed a canon of Waltham-abbey through the patronage of queen Adelicia. This chronicler is the same person who has so eloquently described the dismal search made for Harold's body, after the battle of Hastings.

Adelicia was deprived of the society of her royal husband a few weeks after their marriage, in consequence of a formidable inbreak of the Welsh, who had entered Cheshire, and committed great ravages. Henry went in person to the defence of his border counties, and having defeated the invaders, pursued them far into the country. During this campaign his life was in some peril: while separated from the main body of his troops, in a narrow defile among the mountains, he fell into an ambush, and at the same time an arrow, which was aimed at him from the heights above, struck him on the breast, but rebounded from his armour of proof. Henry, who probably did not give his Cambrian foes credit for that skill in archery for which his Norman followers were famed, intimated his suspicions of treachery among his own people by exclaiming, "By our Lord's death! it was no Welsh hand that shot that arrow."[1] This narrow escape, or perhaps a wish of rejoining Adelicia at Westminster, induced the king to conclude a peace with the Welsh. A very brief season of domestic intercourse was, however, permitted to the royal pair. Fulk, earl of Anjou, having espoused his younger daughter Sybil to William Clito, the earls of Mellent and Montfort, with a considerable party of the baronage of Normandy, openly declared themselves in favour of that prince, the heir of their lawful duke, Robert Courthose.

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[1] See Cottonian MSS. Julius, D.

Henry I. was keeping the Easter festival, with his beautiful young queen, at Winchester, when the news that Fulk of Anjou had joined this formidable confederacy reached him. He sailed for Normandy in April 1123; and Adelicia was left, as his former queen, Matilda of Scotland, had often been before her, to hold her lonely courts during the protracted absence of her royal consort, and to exert herself for the preservation of the internal peace of England, while war or state policy detained the king in Normandy. Adelicia, following the example of her popular predecessor Matilda, "the good queen," in all that was deserving of imitation, conducted herself in a manner calculated to win the esteem and love of the nation,—using her queenly influence for the establishment of good order, religion, and refinement, and the encouragement of learning and the arts.

When Henry had defeated his enemies at the battle of Terroude, near Rouen, he sent for his young queen to come to him. Adelicia obeyed the summons, and sailed for Normandy. She arrived in the midst of scenes of horror, for Henry took a merciless vengeance on the revolted vassals of Normandy who were so unfortunate as to fall into his hands. His treatment of the luckless troubadour knight, Luke de Barré,[2] though the circumstances are almost too dreadful for repetition, bears too strongly on the manners and customs of the twelfth century to be omitted. Luke de Barré had, according to the testimony of Ordericus Vitalis, been on terms of the greatest familiarity with Henry Beauclerc in the days of their youth, but, from some cause, had joined the revolt of the earl of Mellent in the late insurrection; and the said earl, and all the confederate peers allied against Henry's government in Normandy, had been wonderfully comforted and encouraged by the *sirventes*, or war-songs, of Luke. These songs were provokingly satirical; and, being personally levelled against Henry, contained, we should suppose, some passages which involved a betrayal of confidence, for Henry was so bitterly incensed, that, forgetful of their former intimacy, he barbarously condemned the luckless poet to lose his eyes on a scaffold, by the hands of the public executioner. This sentence was greatly lamented by the court, for Luke de Barré was not only a pleasant and jocose companion, but a gentleman of courage and honour.

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[1] Chron. Walli.

[2] Sismondi.

The earl of Flanders interceded with his royal kinsman for the wretched victim.[1] "No, sir, no," replied Henry; "for this man, being a wit, a bard, and a minstrel, forsooth! hath composed many ribald songs against me, and sung them to raise the horse-laughs of mine enemies. Now it hath pleased God to deliver him into mine hands, punished he shall be, to deter others from the like petulance." The sentence therefore took place, and the hapless poet died of the wounds he received in struggling with the executioner. The Provençal annalists, however, declare that the gallant troubadour avoided the execution of Henry's sentence by dashing his head against the wall, which caused his death.[2] So much for the punishment of libels in the twelfth century!

Queen Adelicia returned to England September 1126, accompanied by king Henry and his daughter, the empress Matilda, the heiress-presumptive of England, then a widow in her twenty-fourth year. Matilda, after the funeral of her august spouse, took possession of his imperial diadem, which she brought to England, together with a treasure which, in those days, was by some considered of even greater importance,—the hand of St. James. Matilda was reluctant to leave Germany, where she was splendidly dowered, and enjoyed a remarkable share of popularity. The princes of the empire were so much charmed at her prudent conduct and stately demeanour, that they entreated the king, her father, to permit her to choose a second consort from among their august body, promising to elect for their emperor the person on whom her choice might fall.[1]

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] Ibid. Sismondi.

King Henry, however, despairing of a male heir, as he had been married to Adelicia six years, reclaimed his widowed daughter from the admiring subjects of her late consort, and carried her with him to England. Soon after their arrival, Henry summoned a parliament for the purpose of causing the empress Matilda to be acknowledged as the heiress-presumptive to the crown. This was the first instance that had occurred, since the consolidation of the Heptarchy under one supreme head, of a female standing in that important position with regard to the succession of the English crown. There was, however, neither law nor precept to forbid a female from holding the regal office, and Henry failed not to set forth to the representatives of the great body of the people, who had been summoned on this important business, his daughter's descent from their ancient line of sovereigns; telling them, "That through her, who was now his only heir, they should come to be governed again by the royal English blood, if they would make oath to secure to her, after his death, the succession as queen of England, in case of his decease without a male heir."[2] It is, doubtless, on the authority of this remarkable passage in Henry's speech, that historians have called his first wife, Matilda of Scotland, the heiress of the Saxon line.

The people of England joyfully acceded to Henry's proposition, and the nobles and prelates of the Norman aristocracy, assembled in council on this occasion, swore fealty to the high and mighty lady Matilda as their future sovereign. Stephen, earl of Mortagne, the king's favourite nephew, (being the third son of the Conqueror's fourth daughter, Adela countess of Blois,) was the first who bent his knee in homage to the daughter of his liege lord as the heiress of England, and swore to maintain her righteous title to the throne of her royal father.

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[1] Gem. W. Malmesbury. Sir John Hayward. Speed.

[2] Henry of Huntingdon. W. Malmesbury. Gem.

Stephen was the handsomest man in Europe, and remarkable for his fine carriage and knightly prowess. He bore great sway in the councils of his royal uncle, and was a general favourite of the nobles of England and Normandy. It has been said, withal, that his fine person and graceful manners made a deep impression on the heart of the widowed heiress of England.

The royal family kept their Christmas this year at Windsor,[1] at which time king Henry, in token of his esteem for queen Adelicia, gave her the whole county of Salop. The empress Matilda did not grace the festivities by her presence, but remained in the deepest seclusion, "abiding continually," says Matthew Paris, "in the chamber of Adelicia;" by which it appears that, notwithstanding her high rank and matronly dignity as the widow of an emperor, the heiress of England had no establishment of her own. This retirement, lasting for several months, gave rise to mysterious rumours as to the cause of her being hidden from the people, who had so recently been required to swear fealty to her as their future sovereign. By some it was said "that the king, her father, suspected her of having accelerated the death of her late husband, the emperor, or of causing him to be spirited away from his palace."[2] But that was evidently a groundless surmise; for W. Gemeticiensis, a contemporary chronicler, bears testimony to "her prudent and gracious behaviour to her imperial spouse, which," he observes, "was one of the causes which won the esteem of the German princes, who were urgent in their entreaties to her royal father for her restoration." This Henry pertinaciously refused, repeating, "that she was his only heir, and must dwell among her own people." Yet, early in the following year, he again bestowed her in marriage, without the consent of his subjects in England, and decidedly against her own inclination, on a foreign prince, whom she regarded with the most ineffable scorn as her inferior in every point of view.

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[1] Saxon Annals.

[2] Ever since the miserable death of his unhappy father, Henry IV., the emperor Henry V. had been subject to great mental disquiet, from the remorse which perpetually deprived him of rest. "One night he rose up from the side of the empress, and taking his staff in hand, with naked feet he wandered forth into the darkness, clad only in a woollen garment, and was never again seen in his own palace." This wild tale is related by Hoveden, Giraldus, and Higden, and various ancient manuscript chronicles, to say nothing of Trevisa, who adds, by way of sequel to the legend, that "the conscience-stricken emperor fled to England, where at Westchester he became a hermit, changing his name to 'God's-call,' or the called of God. He lived in daily penance for the space of ten years, and was buried in the cathedral church of St. Werburga the Virgin."

We have seen that, in her tender infancy, Matilda was used as a political puppet by her parent to advance his own interest, without the slightest consideration for her happiness. *Then* the victim was led a smiling sacrifice to the altar, unconscious of the joyless destiny to which parental ambition had doomed her. *Now* the case was different; it was no meek infant, but a royal matron, who had shared the imperial throne of a Kaiser, and received for years the homage of vassal princes. Moreover, she whom Henry endeavoured to compel to an abhorrent marriage of state, possessed a mind as inflexible as his own. The disputes between the king and his daughter must have arisen to a very serious height before he took the unpopular step of subjecting her to personal restraint, by confining her to the apartments of his queen. Matthew Paris, indeed, labours to convince us that there was nothing unreasonable in this circumstance. "Where," says he, "should an empress live rather than with a queen, a daughter than with a mother, a fair lady, a widow and the heir of a great nation, than where her person might be safest from danger, and her conduct from suspicion?" The historian, however, forgets that Matilda was the step-daughter of the queen; that Adelicia was not older than herself, and, from the acknowledged gentleness of her disposition, unlikely to assume the slightest maternal control over the haughty heiress of England. Adelicia must have felt herself very delicately situated in this business; and it appears probable that she acted as a mediator between the contending parties, conducting herself rather as a loving sister than an ambitious step-dame. The accomplished editor of the Howard Memorials infers that a very tender friendship existed between the empress Matilda and Adelicia through life, which probably had commenced before 'the fair maid of Brabant' was selected from among the princesses of Europe to share the crown of England with

Henry I.; for Matilda's imperial spouse, the emperor Henry V., had been actively instrumental in assisting Godfrey Barbatus, the father of Adelicia, in the recovery of Lower Lorraine,—an obligation which the Louvaine princess certainly endeavoured to repay to his widow.[1] Adelicia's uncle, Wido of Louvaine, afterwards pope Calixtus II., was at one period archbishop of Vienne, and it is even possible that Henry's attention was first attracted to the fair maid of Brabant at the court of his daughter; and the previous intimacy between the ladies may account for the fact that the haughty Matilda lived on such good terms with her step-mother, for Adelicia appears to have been the only person with whom she did not quarrel.

The prince to whom Henry I. had pledged the hand of his perverse heiress, was Geoffrey Plantagenet, the eldest son of his old antagonist, Fulk earl of Anjou, and brother to the widowed princess who had been espoused to Matilda's brother, William the Atheling. Geoffrey had been the favourite companion of king Henry I. when on the continent. His fine person, his elegant manners, great bravery, and, above all, his learning, made his society very agreeable to a monarch who still possessed these excellences in great perfection.[2] Some of the French chroniclers declare this Geoffrey to be the first person that bore the name of Plantagenet, from putting in his helmet a plume of the flowering broom when he went to hunt in the woods.

Motives of policy inclined Henry to this alliance. Fulk of Anjou, who had hitherto supported the claims of his gallant young son-in-law, William Clito, to the dukedom, was willing to abandon his cause, provided Henry would marry Matilda to his heir. This Henry had engaged to do, without the slightest attention to his daughter's feelings. His favourite nephew, Stephen of Blois, is said to have rendered himself only too dear to the imperial widow, although at that time a married man. The ceremony of betrothment between Geoffrey of Anjou and the reluctant Matilda took place on Whit-Sunday, 1127, and she was, after the festivities of Whitsuntide were over, conducted into Normandy by her half-brother, Robert earl of Gloucester, and Brian, son of Alan Fergeant, earl of Richmond, with great pomp.

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[1] Howard Memorials. Chronicles of Brabant.

[2] 1126 to 1127. Chron. de Normand. and Script. Rer. France.

The feasts and pageants that attended her arrival in Normandy were prolonged during three weeks. On the first day, heralds in grand costume went through the streets and squares of Rouen, shouting at every crossway this singular proclamation:

"THUS SAITH KING HENRY!

"Let no man here present, whether native or foreigner, rich or poor, high or low, warrior or rustic, be so bold as to stay away from the royal rejoicings; for whosoever shall not take a part in the games and diversions, shall be considered guilty of an offence to our lord the king."[1]

King Henry had given positive commands to Matilda and her illustrious escort, that the nuptials should be solemnized by the archbishop of Rouen immediately on her arrival;[2] but he was himself compelled to undertake a voyage to Normandy, in August, to see the marriage concluded, which did not take place till the 26th of that month;[3] from which we may reasonably infer that the reluctant bride paid very little attention to his directions. The affair was at length, however, accomplished to Henry's satisfaction, more especially as Fulk of Anjou, being called to the throne of Jerusalem by the death of Baldwin II., his father-in-law, resigned his patrimonial territories to his heir. Yet there were many circumstances that rendered this alliance a fruitful source of annoyance to Henry. The Anglo-Norman barons and prelates were highly offended in the first place, that the king should have presumed to marry the heiress of the realm without consulting them on the subject; and the English were no less displeased at the open violence that had been put on the inclinations of the descendant of their ancient sovereigns in this foreign marriage. As for Matilda, it should seem that she did not consider herself by any means bound to practise the duty of obedience, or even of common courtesy, to a husband who had thus been forced upon her against her own will; and while she exacted the most unqualified submissions from her luckless helpmate, she perpetually wearied her father with complaints of his conduct.

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[1] Brompton. Malmesbury. Script. Rer. France.

[2] Saxon Annals. S Dunelm. Malmesbury. Huntingdon [3] Saxon Annals

Queen Adelicia was rejoined by king Henry, in the autumn, and they kept their Christmas together in London. Early in the following spring, 1128, he was again compelled to embark for Normandy, to defeat the enterprising designs of his nephew, William Clito, who, having succeeded to the earldom of Flanders, in right of his grandmother Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror, was enabled to assume a more formidable attitude than he had yet done. But this gallant and unfortunate prince met with his death in consequence of a slight wound in the thumb, which he took in disarming a mutinous soldier of his lance. He died six days after,[1] in the monastery of St. Bertin, July 27, 1128. This formidable rival being now removed, Henry appeared at the summit of his ambition, and was considered the mightiest monarch of the West. He was the husband, withal, of one of the most beautiful and amiable princesses in Europe.

Whether the fair Adelicia loved her royal spouse, history has not recorded; but her conduct as a wife, a queen, and even as a step-mother, was irreproachable. When all circumstances are considered, it can scarcely be imagined, however, that her splendid marriage was productive of happiness to the youthful wife of Henry I. To say nothing of the disparity in years between this illustrious pair, the morbid sorrow of which Henry was the perpetual prey after the loss of his children in the 'white ship,' the irascibility of temper to which he gave way in his old age, and his bitter disappointment at the want of offspring from his second marriage, must have been most distressing to the feelings of his gentle consort. Then the stormy disputes between Henry and his only daughter Matilda could not have been otherwise than very painful to her. Whatever, however, were the trials with which Adelicia had to contend, she evidently supported them with silent magnanimity, and at the same time endeavoured to soothe and cheer the gloom of her wayward lord by attracting to the court the most distinguished poets and minstrels of the age, who repaid her liberal patronage by celebrating her virtues and her charms.

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[1] His captive father, Robert Courthose, it is said, one morning surprised his attendants by weeping piteously, and exclaiming, "My son is dead! my son is dead!" and related, "that he had in his dreams, that night, seen him mortally wounded with a lance."—Ordericus Vitalis.

Adelicia frequently attended her royal husband on his progresses. Her presence was, doubtless, of medicinal influence in those fearful hours when the pangs of troubled conscience brought the visitations of an evil spirit upon Henry, and sleep either forsook his pillow or brought visionary horrors in its train. "In the year 1130, the king complained to Grimbald, his Saxon physician, that he was sore disquieted of nights, and that he seemed to see a great number of husbandmen with their rustical tools stand about him, threatening him for wrongs done against them. Sometimes he appeared to see his knights and soldiers threatening him; which sight so feared him in his sleep, that ofttimes he rose undrest out of his bed, took weapon in hand, and sought to kill them he could not find. Grimbald, his physician, being a notably wise man, expounded his dreams by true conjecture, and willed him to reform himself by alms and prayer, as Nebuchadnezzar did by the counsel of Daniel."[1] It is probable that the unfortunate troubadour knight, Luke de Barré, was not forgotten by the conscience-stricken monarch, though historians have not recorded that his mangled form was among the ghastly *dramatis personæ* that, in his latter years, made king Henry's nights horrible. Malmesbury tells us, moreover, that Henry had an inveterate habit of snoring: "his sleep was heavy, but interrupted with loud and perpetual snoring." Sergel adds, that he was so haunted with the fear of assassination, that he frequently changed his bed, increased his guards, and caused a sword and shield to be constantly placed near him at night,—no enviable state of companionship, we should imagine, for the young and innocent being whose fate was indissolubly linked with his. It must have been a relief at all times to Adelicia when her royal husband's presence was required in Normandy.

On the death of Adelicia's uncle, pope Calixtus II., a dispute occurring in the election of two rival pontiffs as successors to the papal chair, Henry proceeded to the continent in the year 1130, in the hope of reaping some political advantage from the candidate whose cause he espoused. His arrangements were perfectly satisfactory as to that matter, but he was to the last degree harassed by the quarrels between his daughter and her unbeloved spouse, Geoffrey of Anjou. After he had thrice adjusted their differences, Matilda, on some fresh offence which she either gave or took, abjured her husband's company, departed from his court, and claimed the protection of the king her father, with whom she once more returned to England,[1] having, by the eloquence of tears and complaints, succeeded in exciting his indignation against her husband, and persuading him that she was an injured person. The oath of fealty to Matilda, as the heiress of England, was again renewed by the general estates of the nation at Northampton, September, 1131.[2] The count of Anjou then sent an humble entreaty to his haughty consort to return to him; the king and parliament seconded his request, and all due submissions having been made by Geoffrey, Matilda was at length induced to obey him.[3]

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[1] Stowe. H. Huntingdon.

The following year was remarkable for a destructive fire, which consumed the greatest part of London;[4] but soon after this national calamity, the joyful news that the empress Matilda had given birth to a prince[5] diverted the attention of the royal family from the contemplation of this misfortune, and cast the last gleam of brightness on the declining years of the king. The young prince was named Henry, after his royal grandfather, the king of England. The Normans called him Fitz-Empress, but king Henry proudly styled the boy

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[1] Roger Hoveden. H. Huntingdon.

[2] Malmesbury. H. Huntingdon.

[3] A passage from Mezerai casts some light on the separation that took place between the widowed empress and her new spouse. After the nuptials of this pair, a monk came to Matilda, and declared that her late lord, the emperor Henry, had not died at Utrecht, as she and all the world supposed, but that he finished his days as a servant in an hospital, which severe penance he had sworn to inflict on himself for his heavy sins. When dying at Angers, the disguised emperor discovered himself to this monk, his confessor, who came to Matilda with the news. In conclusion, it is said the empress attended the death-bed of Henry V., and recognised and acknowledged him as the emperor, her first husband.

[4] H. Huntingdon.

[5] R. Diceto. M. Paris

Fitz-Conqueror, in token of his illustrious descent from the mightiest monarch of the line.[1]

King Henry summoned his last parliament in 1133, for the purpose of causing this precious child to be included in the oath of fealty, by which the succession to the throne was for the third time secured to his daughter, the empress Matilda. If queen Adelicia had brought him a son, after these repeated acts in favour of his daughter (by a princess whom the majority of the people regarded as the heiress of the royal English line), a civil war respecting the succession must have occurred. The childless state of the beautiful young queen, though so deeply lamented by her royal husband, was one of the causes of the amity and confidence that subsisted between her and her haughty step-daughter.

Towards the latter end of this summer, king Henry embarked on his last voyage for Normandy. The day was remarkable for a total eclipse of the sun, accompanied with storms and violent commotions of the deep.[2] It was so dark, say the annalists of that era, "that on board the royal ship no man might see another's face for some hours." The eclipse was followed by an earthquake; and these two phenomena were, according to the spirit of the age, regarded as portents of horror and woe, and it was predicted that the king would never return from Normandy.[3] On a former occasion, when Henry had embarked for England, in June 1131, he was so dismayed by the bursting of a water-spout over the vessel, and the fury of the wind and waves, that, believing his last hour was at hand, he made a penitent acknowledgment of his sins, promising to lead a new life if it should please God to preserve him from the peril of death, and, above all, he vowed to repeal the oppressive impost of 'danegelt' for seven years, if he were permitted to reach the English shore in safety.[4] From this incident we may infer that Henry I. was by no means impressed with his brother Rufus's bold idea, of the security of a king of England from a watery grave; but the catastrophe of his children in the fatal 'white ship,' had no doubt some effect on his mind during these perils on the deep.

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[1] M. Westminster.

[2] Saxon Annals.

[3] W. Malmesbury.

[4] Saxon Annals.

The summer of 1133 he spent in Normandy, in feasts and rejoicings for the birth of his infant grandson. That event was, however, only the precursor of fresh dissensions between that ill-assorted pair, the empress Matilda and her husband Geoffrey Plantagenet. Her late visit to England had renewed the scandalous reports respecting her partiality for her cousin, Stephen of Blois; while the birth of a son in the sixth year of her marriage, proved any thing but a bond of union between her and her consort.[1]

There is no reason to suppose that Adelicia was with the king her husband at the time of his death, which took place in Normandy, in the year 1135, at the castle of Lyons, near Rouen, a place in which he much delighted. It is said, that having over-fatigued himself in hunting in the forest of Lyons, he returned much heated, and, contrary to the advice of his courtiers and physicians, made too full a meal on a dish of stewed lampreys, his favourite food, which brought on a violent fit of indigestion, (called by the chroniclers a surfeit,) ending in a fever, of which he died, after an illness of seven days, at midnight, December 1st, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. He appears to have been perfectly conscious of his approaching dissolution, for he gave particular directions respecting his obsequies to his natural son, Robert earl of Gloucester, whom he charged to take 60,000 marks out of his treasure-chest at Falaise, for the expenses of his funeral and the payment of his mercenary troops.[2] He solemnly bequeathed his dominions to his daughter the empress, not without some indignant mention of her luckless spouse, Geoffrey of Anjou, his former *élève* and *bel ami.* He absolutely excluded him from any share in his bequests, and with much earnestness constituted his beloved son, earl Robert, the protector of his daughter's rights.

Robert of Gloucester gives the following serio-comic account of the royal wilfulness, in partaking of the interdicted food which caused his death:—

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[1] Saxon Chronicle.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis. W. Malmesbury.

"When he came home, he willed him a lamprey to eat,
Though his leeches him forbade, for it was a feeble meat;
But he would not them believe, for he loved it well enow,
And ate in evil case, for the lamprey it him slew;
For right soon after it into anguish him drew,
And he died for his lamprey, unto his own woe."

The noble earls who surrounded the death-bed of king Henry, and listened to his last instructions respecting his funeral, attended his remains from the town of St. Denis le Forment (where he breathed his last) to Rouen; and when they entered that city, they reverently bore the bier, on which the royal corpse was laid, on their shoulders by turns.[1]

Two illuminated portraits of Henry I. are in existence: both represent him as advanced in life, and in a melancholy attitude,—supposed to be after the loss of his children. His face is handsome, with high and regular features, his hair curling, but not long. His figure is emaciated in one; he is clad in a very close dress, with his regal mantle folded about him; his shoe and stocking all of a piece, and the toe pointed: his crown is ornamented with three trefoils; his sceptre is a staff with an ornamented head: he is seated on a stone bench, carved in an architectural design. He is represented in the other in the robes he wore at the bridal coronation of Adelicia.[2]

Henry received from his subjects the title of 'the Lion of Justice.' This appellation was drawn from the prophecies of Merlin, then very popular in England. On the accession of every sovereign to the English throne, all his subjects consulted these rigmaroles, as naturally as we consult an almanac to know when there is a new moon. "After two dragons," says Merlin, "the lion of Justice shall come, at whose roaring the Gallic towers and island serpents shall tremble."

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[1] Henry of Huntingdon.

[2] These portraits exactly agree with the descriptions of the costume from the monastic chronicles:—"They wore close breeches and stockings, all of a piece, made of fine cloth." The pointed shoes were brought in by William Rufus, but were first invented by Folque le Rechin (whose surname means 'the quarreller') count of Anjou, to hide his corns and bunions. The queen and women of rank wore gowns and mantles trailing on the ground. The married women wore an additional robe over the gown, not unlike the sacerdotal garment; to the girdle a large pouch or purse was suspended, called an *aumonière*. The men wore their hair in long curls, which provoked the wrath of popular preachers: the married women braided theirs very closely to the side of the face, or hid it.

This 'lion of Justice' certainly suffered no one to break the laws but himself. If he is accountable for the villanies of his purveyors, his standard of justice was not very high: "The king's servants, and a multitude following the royal retinue, took and spoiled every thing the way the king went, there being no discipline or good order taken.[1] When they could not consume what they found in the house they had broken into, they made the owners carry it to market and sell it for them; they burned the provisions, or washed their horses' feet with the ale or mead, or poured the drink on the ground, or otherwise wasted it, so that every one hearing of the king's coming would run away from their houses." Whenever Henry I. was under any apprehensions from his brother Robert, he regulated his household somewhat better, and kept the lawlessness of his purveyors within bounds.[2]

Henry carried the art of dissimulation to such a pitch, that his grand justiciary started when he heard the king had praised him, and exclaimed, "God defend me! The king praises no one but him whom he means to destroy."[3] The result proved the deep knowledge which the minister had of his royal master's character, as Henry of Huntingdon, his archdeacon, details at length.

The removal of Henry's body for interment was delayed for several weeks by tempestuous weather; but the seas becoming calmer after Christmas, it was put on shipboard, and safely transported to England. His obsequies were celebrated with great magnificence in the abbey church of Reading, which he had built and endowed for that purpose. His nephew and successor, Stephen, assisted at the funeral. Queen Adelicia gave one hundred shillings annually out of her wharf at London, called Queenhythe, for the expenses of a lamp to burn perpetually before his tomb.

On the first anniversary of king Henry's death, the royal widow, accompanied by her brother Josceline of Louvaine, and attended by her almoners, chaplains, and the officers of her household, entered the abbey-church of Reading, where, being received with all due ceremonials of respect by a numerous train of abbots, priors, and priests, she proceeded in solemn pomp up the aisle, supported by the bishops of Salisbury and Worcester, and gave public testimonial of her regard for the memory of her late consort, by placing with her own hand a rich pall on the altar, in token that she made an oblation to God and the monks of St. Mary, Reading, of her manor of Eastone,[1] in Hertfordshire (formerly given to her by her said lord king Henry,) in order to obtain their prayers for the benefit of his soul, her own soul, the souls of her father and mother, and also for the health of the reigning sovereign king Stephen, and queen Maud his wife. By a second charter, commencing "Ego Adalid regina," she also gave the manor of

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[1] Eadmer. [2] Malmesbury. [3] Henry of Huntingdon.

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[1] The original charter is still in excellent preservation, in the possession of Abel Smith, esquire, M. P. Having been favoured with a translation of this curious document, through the kindness of my learned friend, Rouge Croix, I subjoin it, in illustration of the customs of that era, and as affording evidence of the disputed fact, that Josceline of Louvaine joined his royal sister in England:—

"QUEEN ADELID'S CHARTER.

"Be it known to all the faithful of Holy Church of all England and Normandy, that I, queen Adelidis, wife of the most noble king Henry, and daughter of Godefry duke of Lorraine, have granted and given for ever to God and the church of St. Mary of Reading, for the health and redemption of the soul of my lord the most noble king Henry, and of mine own; and also for the health of my lord Stephen, by the grace of God king of the English, and of queen Maud his wife, and all the offspring of the most noble king Henry, and of my father and mother and relations, as well living as dead, my manor of Eastone, which my lord the most noble king Henry gave to me as his queen and wife, in Hertfordshire, with all its appurtenances, to be held as freely and quietly as ever I myself held it best in demesne by the gift of my lord the most noble king Henry; that is, with sac and soc, and toll and team, and infangthef with the church and the demesne land, with men free and villains, with wood and plain, with meadow and pasture, with waters and mills, with roads and ways, with all the customs and liberties with which my lord held it in demesne, and gave it to me. And this gift I have made on the first anniversary of my lord the most noble king Henry in the same church, by the offering of a pall which I placed on the altar, in presence of the subscribed; that is, of Roger bishop of Salisbury, Simon bishop of Worcester, Ingulf abbot of Abingdon, Walter abbot of Eynesham, Bernard abbot of St. Michael's-mount, Warine prior of Worcester, Nicholas prior of St. Martin's of Battle, Ralf prior of Osney, Herman chaplain to the queen, master Serlo the queen's clerk, Adam and Robin Fitzwalter, canons of Waltham, Ralf, Theobald, and Roger, clerks of the bishop of Salisbury, Simon, nephew of the bishop of Worcester, Gervase and Bertram, clerks of the bishop of Worcester, Josceline, brother to the same queen, Peverel of Beauchamp, Milo of Beauchamp, Stephen of Beauchamp, Hugo of Cramonville, Maurice of Windsor and his brother Reginald, Geoffrey of Tresgoz, Robert of Tresgoz, John de Falaise, Robert of Calz, Franco of Bruscella, Gozo the queen's constable, Engelbert of the hall, William of Harfleot, William of Berckeley, Walter of Dene, Baldwin Despenser, Vical the waterman, Warine of Blancbuisson. At Rading. [Reading]."

Stanton Harcourt, in Oxfordshire, &c. &c., for the expenses of a solemn service for the repose of her royal husband's soul.[1]

What degree of happiness Adelicia the Fair enjoyed during the fifteen years of queenly splendour which she passed as the consort of Henry Beauclerc, no surviving records tell; but that she was very proud of his achievements and brilliant talents, we have the testimony of the poetical chronicler who continued the history of Brut, from William the Conqueror through the reign of William Rufus. It appears, moreover, that the royal dowager employed herself during her widowhood in collecting materials for the history of her mighty lord; for Gaimar, the author of the History of the Angles, observes, "that if he had chosen to have written of king Henry, he had a thousand things to say, which the troubadour called David, employed by queen Adelicia, knew nought about; neither had he written, nor was the Louvaine queen herself in possession of them." If the collection of queen Adelicia should ever be brought to light, it would no doubt afford a curious specimen of the biographical powers of the illustrious widow and her assistant, troubadour David, whose name has only been rescued from oblivion by the jealousy of a disappointed rival in the art of historical poetry.

Adelicia is much eulogized in the songs of the poets she patronised. A third *trouvère* or troubadour, in his dedication of the wondrous voyage of St. Brandon, a sort of spiritual Sindbad, praises her for the good laws she had instituted. But the second queen-consort of Henry I. could have had little opportunity for the exercise of her legislatorial talents, save in the gentle influence of her refined and virtuous example, and the establishment of civilizing etiquette. It was one of Adelicia's best points, that she sedulously trod in the steps of her popular predecessor, Matilda of Scotland, and thus won the following elegant tribute from the author of St. Brandon's voyage.—

"Lady Adelais, who queen[2]
By the grace of heaven hath been

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[1] Howard Memorials.

[2] Cottonian MSS. Vespasian, b. x. Such is the reference for the original, but we have gladly availed ourselves of the editorial labours of a learned contributor to Blackwood's Magazine, 1836, p. 807.

Y-crowned,—who this land hath blest
With peace and wholesome laws and rest,
Both by king Henry's stalwart might,
And by thy counsels mild and right.
For this their holy benisons,
May the apostles shed, each one,
A thousand thousandfold on thee!
And since thy mild command hath won me,
To turn this goodly history
Into romaunt, and carefully
To write it out, and soothly tell
What to St. Brandon erst befell,—
At thy command I undertake
The task right gladly."

The poem is full of beauty, and reflects no little credit on the taste of the queen.

During the life of the king her husband, Adelicia had founded and endowed the hospital and conventual establishment of St. Giles, near Wilton;[1] and, according to a Wiltshire tradition, she resided there during some part of her widowhood, in the house which is still called by her name.[2] She was likewise dowered by her late husband, king Henry, in the fair domain of Arundel-castle and its rich dependencies, the forfeit inheritance[3] of the brutal Robert, earl of Belesme; and here, no doubt, the royal widow held her state at the expiration of the first year of cloistered seclusion after the death of her illustrious spouse.

Camden thus describes the spot, which the magnificent taste of the late duke of Norfolk has, within the last century, rendered one of the most splendid objects of attraction in England:—"Beyond Selsey, the shore breaks, and makes way for a river that runs out of St. Leonard's forest, and then by Arundel, seated on a hill, over a vale of the river Arun." At this Saxon castle, built and strengthened on the hill above the waters, Adelicia was residing when she consented to become the wife of William de Albini 'of the Strong Hand,' the lord of Buckenham in Norfolk, and one of the most chivalrous peers in Europe. According to Mr. Howard's computation, Adelicia was in her thirty-second year at the time of king Henry's death, in the very pride of her beauty; and she contracted her second marriage in the third year of her widowhood, A.D. 1138.[1]

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[1] Howard Memorials.
[2] Sir Richard Hoare's Modern Wiltshire.
[3] Tierney's Arundel.

Her second spouse, William de Albini with the Strong Arm, was the son of William de Albini, who was called Pincerna,[2] being the chief butler or cup-bearer of the duchy of Normandy. William the Conqueror appointed him to the same office in England, at his coronation in Westminster-abbey; which honour has descended by hereditary custom to the duke of Norfolk, his rightful representative and heir; and when there is a coronation-banquet, the golden cup, out of which the sovereign drinks to the health of his or her loving subjects, becomes his perquisite.[3] It appears that Adelicia and Albini were affianced some time previous to their marriage; for when he won the prize at the tournament held at Bourges in 1137, in honour of the nuptials of Louis VII. of France and Eleanora of Aquitaine, Adelicia or Adelaide, the gay queen-dowager of France, fell passionately in love with him, and wooed him to become her husband; but he replied, "that his troth was pledged to Adelicia, the queen of England."[4]

Although it may be considered somewhat remarkable that two queen-dowagers of similar names should have fixed their affections on the same gentleman, there is every reason to believe that such was the fact; but the marvellous legend so gravely related by Dugdale,[5] containing the sequel of the tale, namely, the unlady-like conduct of the rejected dowager of France, in pushing the strong-handed Albini into a cave in her garden, where she had secreted a fierce lion to become the minister of her jealous vengeance, together with the knight's redoubtable exploit in tearing out the lion's heart, which he must have found conveniently situated at the bottom of his throat, (a place where no anatomist would have thought of feeling for it,) must be regarded as one of the popular romances of the age of chivalry. We have seen another version of the story, in which the hero is said to have deprived the lion, not of his heart, but his tongue; and this is doubtless the tradition relating to William of the Strong Hand, since the Albini lion

[1] Howard Memorials. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. Dugdale. [5] Dugdale's Baronage.

on the ancient armorial bearings of that house is tongueless, and is, by the by, one of the most good-tempered looking beasts ever seen.

Romance and ideality out of the question, William de Albini was not only a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, stout in combat, and constant in loyalty and love, but history proves him to have been one of the greatest and best men of that age. His virtues and talents sufficiently justified the widow of the mighty sovereign of England and Normandy in bestowing her hand upon him; nor was Adelicia's second marriage in the slightest degree offensive to the subjects of her late husband, or considered derogatory to the dignity of a queen-dowager of England. Adelicia, by her union with Albini, conveyed to him a life-interest in her rich dowry of Arundel, and he accordingly assumed the title of earl of Arundel, in her right, as the possessor of Arundel-castle.[1] It was at this feudal fortress, on the then solitary coast of Sussex, that the royal beauty, who had for fifteen years presided over the splendid court of Henry Beauclerc, voluntarily resided with her second husband—the husband, doubtless, of her heart—in the peaceful obscurity of domestic happiness, far remote from the scenes of her former greatness.

Adelicia's wisdom in avoiding all the snares of party, by retiring from public life at a period so full of perilous excitement as the early part of Stephen's reign, cannot be disputed. Her gentle disposition, her good taste, and feminine feelings fitted her for the enjoyments of private life, and she made them her choice. There was, however, nothing of a selfish character in the conduct of the royal matron in declining to exert such influence as she possessed in advocating the claims of her step-daughter, Matilda, to the throne of England. As a queen-dowager, Adelicia had no voice in the choice of a sovereign; as a female, she would have departed from her province had she intermeddled with intrigues of state, even for the purpose of assisting the lawful heir to the crown. She left the question to be decided by the peers and people of England, and as they did not oppose the coronation of Stephen, she had no pretence for interfering; but she never sanctioned the usurpation of the successful rival of her step-daughter's right, by appearing at his court. And when the empress Matilda landed in England to dispute the crown with Stephen, the gates of Arundel-castle were thrown open, to receive her and her train, by the royal Adelicia and her high-minded husband, Albini.[1] It was in the year 1139 when this perilous guest claimed the hospitality, and finally the protection, of the noble pair, whose wedded happiness had been rendered more perfect by the birth of a son, probably very little before that period, for it was only in the second year of their marriage. And she, over whose barrenness, as the consort of the mightiest monarch of the West, both sovereign and people had lamented for nearly fifteen years, became, when the wife of a subject, the mother of a numerous progeny, the ancestress of an illustrious line of English nobles, in whose veins her royal blood has been preserved in uninterrupted course to the present day.

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[1] Howard Memorials. Tierney's Hist. Arundel.

According to Malmesbury, and many other historians, the empress Matilda was only attended by her brother, the earl of Gloucester, and a hundred and forty followers, when she landed at Portsmouth in the latter end of September. Gervase and Brompton aver that she came with a numerous army; but the general bearings of history prove that this was not the fact, since Matilda was evidently in a state of absolute peril when her generous step-mother afforded her an asylum within the walls of Arundel-castle; for we find that her devoted friend and brother, Robert earl of Gloucester, when he saw that she was honourably received there, considered her in a place of safety, and, attended by only twelve persons, proceeded to Bristol.

No sooner was Stephen informed that the empress Matilda was in Arundel-castle, than he raised the siege of Marlborough, and commenced a rapid march towards Arundel, in order to attack her in her retreat. The spirit with which he pushed his operations alarmed the royal ladies.[2] Adelicia dreaded the destruction of her castle, the loss of her beloved husband, and the breaking up of all the domestic happiness she had enjoyed since her retirement from public life. The empress Matilda suffered some apprehension, lest her gentle step-mother should be induced to deliver her into the hands of her foe. There was, however, no less firmness than gentleness in the character of Adelicia; and the moment Stephen approached her walls, she sent messengers to entreat his forbearance, assuring him "that she had admitted Matilda, not as *his* enemy, but as her daughter-in-law and early friend, who had claimed her hospitality, which respect for the memory of her late royal lord, king Henry, forbade her to refuse; and these considerations would compel her to protect her imperial guest while she remained beneath the shelter of her roof.[1] That if he came in hostile array against her castle of Arundel with intent to make Matilda his prisoner, she must frankly say she was resolved to defend her to the last extremity, not only because she was the daughter of her late dear lord, king Henry, but as the widow of the emperor Henry and her guest;" and she besought Stephen, "by all the laws of courtesy and the ties of kindred, not to place her in such a painful strait as to compel her to do any thing against her conscience." In conclusion, she requested, with much earnestness, "that Matilda might be allowed to leave the castle, and retire to her brother." Stephen acceded to the proposal, the siege was raised, and the empress proceeded to join her adherents at Bristol.

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[1] Malmesbury. Speed. Rapin.

[2] Gervase. M. Paris. H. Huntingdon.

We are inclined to regard Stephen's courteous compliance with the somewhat unreasonable prayer of the queen-dowager, as a proof of the high respect in which she was held, and the great influence over the minds of her royal husband's kindred which her virtues and winning qualities had obtained while she wore the crown-matrimonial of England. William of Malmesbury, the only writer who speaks unkindly of Adelicia, intimates that a suspicion of treachery on her part caused the empress Matilda to quit Arundel; "For," says he, "her mother-in-law, through female inconstancy, had broken the faith she had repeatedly pledged by messages sent into Normandy." It is scarcely probable that Adelicia, who took the utmost care to maintain a strict neutrality at this embarrassing crisis, had ever used any flattering professions to persuade the empress Matilda to assert her claims to the throne of England. Her sole offence appears to have been, inflexible determination not to engage herself in the struggle by espousing her imperial step-daughter's cause. Our chronicler, whose book is dedicated to his patron and pupil the earl of Gloucester, gives of course a prejudiced view of conduct which, however politic, was opposed to the interests of their party. Adelicia conducted herself with equal prudence and magnanimity in the defence and deliverance of her step-daughter, exhibiting a very laudable mixture of the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove and the courage of the lion. The lion was the cognizance of the royal house of Louvaine; and Mr. Howard is of opinion, that this proud bearing was assumed by the family of Albini in token of descent from 'the fair maid of Brabant,'[1] rather than with any reference to the fabled exploit of her second husband, related in Dugdale's Baronage. A grateful remembrance of the generous conduct of Stephen, in all probability withheld Adelicia and Albini from taking part with the empress Matilda against him, in the long and disastrous civil war, which desolated the ravaged plains of England with kindred blood during so many years of that inauspicious reign. They appear to have maintained a strict neutrality, and to have preserved their vassals and neighbours from the evils attendant upon the contest between the empress and the king.

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[1] Gervase. Malmesbury. Rapin.

Adelicia, after her happy marriage with the husband of her choice, was not forgetful of the respect which she considered due to the memory of her late royal lord, king Henry; for, by a third charter, she granted to his favourite abbey of Reading the church of Berkeley-Harness, in Gloucestershire,[2] with suitable endowments, "to pray for the soul of king Henry, and duke Godfrey her father; and also for the health of her present lord," whom she styles "William earl of Chichester, and for her own health, and the health of her children." Thus we observe that this amiable princess unites the departed objects of her veneration in the devotional offices which she fondly caused the monks of Reading to offer up for the welfare of her living husband, her beloved children, and herself. To her third son, Adelicia gave the name of her deceased lord, king Henry. Her fourth was named Godfrey, after her father and elder brother, the reigning duke of Brabant.

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[1] Howard Memorials.

[2] Monasticon, charter ix. Howard Memorials.

Adelicia chiefly resided at Arundel-castle after her marriage with William de Albini, but there is also traditional evidence that she occasionally lived with him in the noble feudal castle which he built, after his marriage with her, at Buckenham in Norfolk. It is still designated in that county as *New* Buckenham, though the mound, part of the moat, and a few mouldering fragments of the walls, are all that remain of the once stately hall that was at times graced with the dowager-court of Alix la Belle.

The priory of St. Bartholomew, likewise called 'the priory of the Causeway,' in the parish of Lyminster, near Arundel, was established by queen Adelicia, after her marriage with William de Albini, as a convent of Augustinian canons.[1] It was situated at the foot of the hill which overlooks the town from the south side of the river. The number of inmates appears originally to have been limited by the royal foundress to two persons, whose principal business was to take charge of the bridge, and to preserve the passage of the river. All her gifts and charters were solemnly confirmed by her husband, William Albini, who appears to have cherished the deepest respect for his royal spouse, always speaking of her as '*eximia regina,*'—that is, inestimable or surpassingly excellent queen.[2] We find, from the Monasticon, that Adelicia gave in trust to the bishop of Chichester certain lands in Arundel, to provide salaries for the payment of two chaplains to celebrate divine service in that castle. The last recorded act of Adelicia was the grant of the prebend of West Dean to the cathedral of Chichester, in 1150.

In the year 1149, a younger brother of Adelicia, Henry of Louvaine, was professed a monk in the monastery of Affligham, near Alost in Flanders, which had been founded by their father Godfrey and his brother Henry of Louvaine; and soon after, the royal Adelicia herself,[1] stimulated no doubt by his example, withdrew not only from the pomps and parade of earthly grandeur, but from the endearments of her adoring husband and youthful progeny, and, crossing the sea, retired to the nunnery in the same foundation, where she ended her days,[2] and was likewise buried.[3] Mr. Howard, in his interesting sketch of the life of his royal ancestress, states it to be his opinion, that Adelicia did not take this important step without the full consent of her husband. Strange as it appears to us, that any one who was at the very summit of earthly felicity should have broken through such fond ties of conjugal and maternal love as those by which Adelicia was surrounded to bury herself in cloistered seclusion, there is indubitable evidence that such was the fact.

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[1] Dugdale's Monasticon, lib. epist. B, vol. xviii.

[2] Howard Memorials.

Sanderus, in his account of the abbeys and churches of Brabant, relates that "Fulgentius, the abbot of Affligham, visited queen Adelicia at the court of her royal husband, Henry I., where he was received with especial honours." The same author expressly states that Adelicia died in the convent of Affligham, and was interred there on the 9th of the calends of April. He does not give the date of the year. From the mortuary of the abbey he quotes the following Latin record of the death of this queen:—

"Aleidem genuit cum barba dux Godefredus,
Qui fuit Anglorum regina piissima morum."

The annals of Margan date this event in the year 1151. There is a charter in Affligham, granted by Henry of Louvaine, on condition that prayers may be said for the welfare of his brother Godfrey, the reigning duke, his sister Aleyda the queen, and Ida the countess of Cleves, and their parents.[4]

Adelicia must have been about forty-eight years old at the time of her death. She had been married eleven years, or thereabouts, to William de Albini, lord of Buckenham. At his paternal domain of New Buckenham, in Norfolk, a foundation was granted by William de Albini 'of the Strong Arm,' enjoining that prayers might be said for the departed spirit of his '*eximia regina.*' He survived her long enough to be the happy means of composing, by an amicable treaty, the death-strife which had convulsed England for fifteen years, in consequence of the bloody succession-war between Stephen and the empress Matilda.[1] This great and good man is buried in Wymondham-abbey, near the tomb of his father, the Pincerna of England and Normandy.

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[1] Buknet, Trophées du Brabant.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sanderus, Abbeys and Churches in Brabant.

[4] Howard Memorials.

By her marriage with Albini, Adelicia became the mother of seven surviving children. William earl of Arundel, who succeeded to the estates and honours; Reyner; Henry; Godfrey; Alice, married to the count d'Eu; Olivia; Agatha. The two latter were buried at Boxgrove, near Arundel. Though Adelicia had so many children by her second marriage, her tender affection for her father's family caused her to send for her younger brother, Josceline of Louvaine, to share in her prosperity and happiness. The munificent earl, her husband, to enable this landless prince to marry advantageously, gave him the fair domain of Petworth, on his wedding Agnes, the heiress of the Percies: "since which," says Camden, "the posterity of that Josceline, who took the name of Percy, have ever possessed it,—a family certainly very ancient and noble, the male representatives of Charlemagne, more direct than the dukes of Guise, who pride themselves on that account. Josceline, in a donation of his which I have seen, uses this title: 'Josceline of Louvaine, brother to queen Adelicia, castellaine of Arundel.'"

Two ducal peers of England are now the representatives of the imperial Carlovingian line; namely, the duke of Norfolk, the heir of queen Adelicia; and the duke of Northumberland, the lineal descendant of her brother Josceline of Louvaine. The two most unfortunate of all the queens of England, Anna Boleyn and Katharine Howard, were the lineal descendants of Adelicia, by her second marriage with William de Albini.

A curious tradition exists at Reading, that Henry I. was buried there in a silver coffin, and that the utter demolition of his monument may be attributed to the persevering zeal of the destroyers of the stately abbey, in their search to discover and appropriate the precious depository. Adelicia's effigy is stated to have been placed at Reading by the side of her husband Henry I., crowned and veiled, because she had been both queen and professed nun.[1] No copy or vestige of it remains.

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[1] This will be detailed in the succeeding biography.

The portrait of Queen Adelicia illustrating this biography, has been drawn by Mr. Harding from her beautiful seal, pendant to the charter she gave Reading-abbey. Although she was then the wife of William de Albini, she is represented in regal costume as queen of England, which in many points varies from that of her predecessors. The transparent veil of Matilda of Flanders is superseded by a drapery similar to the *haike* of the Arabs, and like that celebrated mantle, it is hooded over the head, and falling by each cheek is tied in front of the throat; then flowing in ample folds over the arms, nearly covers the whole of the person. Adelicia's crown confines this mantle to the head, by being fixed over it. The crown is simple: a smooth band of gold with rims, in which circle three large gems are set; three high points rise from it, each terminated with a trefoil of pearls: a cap of satin or velvet is seen just above the circlet. The sceptre of mercy, surmounted with a dove and finished with a trefoil, is held in Adelicia's right hand, the orb of sovereignty in her left, to which, excepting by the especial grace of her royal lord, she could have no right. The queen's robe or gown seems tight to her shape: it is elegantly worked in a diamond pattern from the throat to the feet, over which it flows. The figure is whole-length, standing; and as the seal is a pointed oval nearly three inches long, there was space to give character, not only to the costume, but the features, of which the mediæval artist has availed himself sufficiently to present the only resemblance extant of Adelicia of Louvaine.

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[1] History of Reading, by John Man, p. 282: published by Snare and Man, Reading, 1816. This traditionary description of Adelicia's effigy appears more applicable to her predecessor Matilda, unless we may conjecture that Adelicia wore the conventual dress of the nunnery where she died. Another place is pointed out as the spot where her ashes repose, being the church of Fuggleston, where she founded an hospital.

London Henry Colburn 1851

MATILDA OF BOULOGNE,

QUEEN OF STEPHEN.

Matilda's descent from Saxon kings—Her mother a Saxon princess—Her father—Matilda espoused to Stephen of Blois—Residence at Tower-Royal—Matilda's popularity in London—Stephen seizes the throne—Birth of prince Eustace—Coronation of Matilda—Queen left regent—Disasters—Queen besieges Dover-castle—Mediates peace with her uncle—Empress Matilda lands in England—Henry of Blois—Civil war—Queen goes to France—Marriage of her young heir—Raises an army—Stephen captured—Arrogance of the empress—Queen's grief—Exertions in Stephen's cause—Queen Matilda writes to bishop Blois—Her supplication for Stephen's liberty—Obduracy of the empress—Queen appeals to arms—Empress in Winchester—Her seal—Insults Londoners—Driven from London—Successes of the queen—Takes Winchester—Escape of the empress—Earl of Gloucester taken—Exchanged for Stephen—Illness of king Stephen—Empress escapes from Oxford—Her son—Decline of the empress's cause—Queen Matilda founds St. Katherine by the Tower—Death of the queen—Burial—Tomb—Epitaph—Children—Eustace—Death of king Stephen—Burial by his queen—Exhumation of their bodies.

Matilda of Boulogne, the last of our Anglo-Norman queens, was a princess of the ancient royal line of English monarchs. Her mother, Mary of Scotland, was the second daughter of Malcolm Canmore and Margaret Atheling, and sister to Matilda the Good, the first queen of Henry Beauclerc. Mary of Scotland was educated, with her elder sister, in the royal monasteries of Wilton and Romsey, under the stern tutelage of their aunt Christina; and was doubtless, like the princess Matilda, compelled to assume the habit of a votaress. Whether the youthful Mary testified the same lively antipathy to the consecrated black veil that was exhibited by her elder sister, no gossiping monastic chronicler has recorded; but she certainly forsook the cloister for the court of England, on

Matilda's auspicious nuptials with Henry I., and exchanged the badge of celibacy for the nuptial ring soon afterwards, when her royal brother-in-law gave her in marriage to Eustace count of Boulogne. The father of this nobleman was brother-in-law to Edward the Confessor, having married Goda, the widowed countess of Mantes, sister to that monarch; both himself and his son Eustace had been powerful supporters of the Saxon cause. The enterprising spirit of the counts of Boulogne, and the contiguity of their dominions to the English shores, had rendered them troublesome neighbours to William the Conqueror and his sons, till the chivalric spirit of crusading attracted their energies to a loftier object, and converted these pirates of the narrow seas into heroes of the Cross, and liberators of the holy city.

Godfrey of Boulogne, the hero of Tasso's *Gierusaleme Liberata*, and his brother Baldwin, who successively wore the crown of Jerusalem, were the uncles of Matilda, Stephen's queen. Her father, Eustace count of Boulogne, was also a distinguished crusader. He must have been a mature husband for Mary of Scotland, since he was the companion in arms of Robert of Normandy, and her uncle Edgar Atheling. Matilda, or, as she is sometimes called for brevity, Maud of Boulogne, was the sole offspring of this marriage, and the heiress of this illustrious house. There is every reason to believe Matilda was educated in the abbey of Bermondsey, to which the countess of Boulogne, her mother, was a munificent benefactress. The countess died in this abbey while on a visit to England in the year 1115, and was buried there. We gather from the Latin verses on her tomb, that she was a lady of very noble qualities, and that her death was very painful and unexpected.[1]

Young as Matilda was, she was certainly espoused to Stephen de Blois before her mother's decease; for this plain reason, that the charter by which the countess of Boulogne, in the year 1114, grants to the Cluniac monks of Bermondsey her manor of Kynewardstone, is, in the year she died, confirmed by Eustace her husband, and Stephen her son-in-law.[2]

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[1] Annales Abbatæ de Bermondsey.

[2] Ibid.

Stephen, the third son of a vassal peer of France, obtained this great match through the favour of his royal uncle, Henry I. He inherited from the royal Adela, his mother, the splendid talents, fine person, and enterprising spirit of the mighty Norman line of sovereigns. A very tender friendship had subsisted between Adela countess of Blois, and her brother Henry Beauclerc, who at different periods of his life had been under important obligations to her; and when Adela sent her landless boy to seek his fortunes at the court of England, Henry returned the friendly offices which he had received from this faithful sister, by lavishing wealth and honour on her son.

Stephen received the spurs of knighthood from his uncle king Henry, previous to the battle of Tinchebray, where he took the count of Mortagne prisoner, and received the investiture of his lands. He was farther rewarded by his royal kinsman with the hand of Matilda, the heiress of Boulogne.[1] "When Stephen was but an earl," says William of Malmesbury, "he gained the affections of the people, to a degree that can scarcely be imagined, by the affability of his manners, and the wit and pleasantry of his conversation, condescending to chat and joke with persons in the humblest stations as well as with the nobles, who delighted in his company, and attached themselves to his cause from personal regard."[2]

Stephen was count of Boulogne in Matilda's right, when, as count of Mortagne, he swore fealty in 1126 to the empress Matilda, as heiress to the Norman dominions of Henry I. The London residence of Stephen and Matilda was Tower-Royal, a palace built by king Henry, and presented by him to his favoured nephew on the occasion of his wedding the niece of his queen, Matilda Atheling. The spot to which this regal-sounding name is still appended, is a close lane between Cheapside and Watling-street. Tower-Royal was a fortress of prodigious strength; for more than once, when the Tower of London itself fell into the hands of the rebels, this embattled palace of Stephen remained in security.[3]

It is a remarkable fact, that Stephen had embarked on board the 'Blanche Nef' with his royal cousin, William the Atheling, and the rest of her fated crew; but with two knights of his train, and a few others who prudently followed his example, he left the vessel with the remark that "she was too much crowded with foolish, headstrong young people."[1] After the death of prince William, Stephen's influence with his royal uncle became unbounded, and he was his constant companion in all his voyages to Normandy.

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.
[2] W. Malmesbury. Ordericus Vitalis.
[3] Stowe's Survey. Pennant's London.

There are evidences of conjugal infidelity on the part of this gay and gallant young prince, about this period, proving that Matilda's cup of happiness was not without some alloy of bitterness. How far her peace was affected by the scandalous reports of the passion which her haughty cousin the empress Matilda, the acknowledged heiress of England and Normandy, was said to cherish for her aspiring husband, we cannot presume to say; but there was an angel-like spirit in the princess which supported her under every trial, and rendered her a beautiful example to every royal female in the married state.

Two children, a son and a daughter, were born to the young earl and countess of Boulogne, during king Henry's reign. The boy was named Baldwin, after Matilda's uncle, the king of Jerusalem,—a Saxon name, withal, and therefore likely to sound pleasantly to the ears of the English, who, no doubt, looked with complacency on the infant heir of Boulogne, as the son of a princess of the royal Atheling blood, born among them, and educated by his amiable mother to venerate their ancient laws, and to speak their language. Prince Baldwin, however, died in early childhood, and was interred in the priory of the Holy Trinity, without Aldgate, founded by his royal aunt, Matilda of Scotland. The second child of Stephen and Matilda, a daughter named Maud, born also in the reign of Henry I., died young, and was buried in the same church. Some historians aver that Maud survived long enough to be espoused to the earl of Milan. So dear was the memory of these her buried hopes to the heart of Matilda, that after she became queen of England, and her loss was supplied by the birth of another son and daughter, she continued to lament for them; and the church and hospital of St. Katherine by the Tower were founded and endowed by her, that prayers might be perpetually said by the pious sisterhood for the repose of the souls of her first-born children.

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis.

In the latter days of king Henry, while Stephen was engaged in stealing the hearts of the men of England, after the fashion of Absalom, the mild virtues of his amiable consort recalled to their remembrance her royal aunt and namesake, Henry's first queen, and inspired them with a trembling hope of seeing her place filled eventually by a princess so much more resembling her than the haughty wife of Geoffrey of Anjou. The Norman woman looked upon her mother's people with scorn, and from her they had nothing to expect but the iron yoke which her grandfather, the Conqueror, had laid upon their necks, with, perhaps, an aggravation of their miseries. But Stephen, the husband of her gentle cousin, the English-hearted Matilda, had whispered in their ears of the confirmation of the great charter of their liberties, which Henry of Normandy had granted when he became the husband of the descendant of their ancient kings, and broken when her influence was destroyed by death and a foreign marriage.

King Henry's daughter, the empress Matilda,[1] was the wife of a foreign prince residing on the continent. Stephen and his gentle princess were living in London, and daily endearing themselves to the people by the most popular and affable behaviour. The public mind was certainly predisposed in favour of Stephen's designs, when the sudden death of king Henry in Normandy left the right of succession for the first time to a female heir. Piers of Langtoft thus describes the perplexity of the nation respecting the choice of the sovereign:

"On bier lay king Henry,
On bier beyond the sea,
And no man might rightly know
Who his heir suld be."

Stephen, following the example of the deceased monarch's conduct at the time of his brother Rufus's death,[2] left his royal uncle and benefactor's obsequies to the care of Robert earl of Gloucester, and the other peers who were witnesses to his last words; and embarking at Whitesand, a small port in Matilda's dominions, in a light vessel, on a wintry sea, he landed at Dover in the midst of such a storm of thunder and lightning, that, according to William of Malmesbury, every one imagined the world was coming to an end. As soon as he arrived in London, he convened an assembly of the Anglo-Norman barons, before whom his confederate and friend, Hugh Bigod, the steward of king Henry's household, swore on the holy Evangelists, "that the deceased sovereign had disinherited the empress Matilda on his death-bed, and adopted his most dear nephew Stephen for his heir."[1] On this bold affirmation, the archbishop of Canterbury absolved the peers of the oaths of fealty they had twice sworn to the daughter of their late sovereign, and declared "that those oaths were null and void, and contrary, moreover, to the laws and customs of the English, who had never permitted a woman to reign over them." This was a futile argument, as no female had ever stood in that important position, with regard to the succession to the crown of England, in which the empress Matilda was now placed; therefore no precedent had occurred for the establishment of a salic law in England.

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[1] The biography of the empress Matilda is continued through this life.
[2] Malmesbury.

Stephen was crowned on the 26th of December, his name-day, the feast of St. Stephen.[2] He swore to establish the righteous laws of Edward the Confessor, for the general happiness of all classes of his subjects.[3] The English regarded Stephen's union with a princess of their race as the best pledge of the sincerity of his professions in regard to the amelioration of their condition. These hopes were, of course, increased by the birth of prince Eustace, whom Matilda brought into the world very soon after her husband's accession to the throne of England. It was, perhaps, this auspicious event that prevented Matilda from being associated in the coronation of her lord on St. Stephen's-day, in Westminster-abbey. Her own coronation, according to Gervase, took place March 22nd, 1136, being Easter-Sunday, not quite three months afterwards. Stephen was better enabled to support the expenses of a splendid ceremonial in honour of his beloved queen, having, immediately after his own hasty inauguration, posted to Winchester and made himself master of the treasury of his deceased uncle king Henry; which contained, says Malmesbury, "one hundred thousand pounds, besides stores of plate and jewels."

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[1] Malmesbury. Rapin.

[2] Sir Harris Nicolas's Chronology of History.

[3] Malmesbury. Brompton.

The empress Matilda was in Anjou at the time of her father's sudden demise. She was entirely occupied by the grievous sickness of her husband, who was supposed to be on his death-bed.[1] After the convalescence of her lord, as none of her partisans in England made the slightest movement in her favour, she remained quiescent for a season, well knowing that the excessive popularity of a new monarch is seldom of long continuance in England. Stephen had begun well by abolishing 'danegelt,' and leaving the game in woods, forests, and uncultivated wastes common to all his subjects; but after awhile he repented of his liberal policy, and called courts of inquiry to make men give account of the damage and loss he had sustained in his fallow-deer and other wild game; he likewise enforced the offensive system of the other Norman monarchs for their preservation. Next he obtained the enmity of the clergy, by seizing the revenues of the see of Canterbury; and lastly, to the great alarm and detriment of the peacefully disposed, he imprudently permitted his nobles to build or fortify upwards of a thousand of those strongholds of wrong and robbery called castles, which rendered their owners in a great measure independent of the crown.

Baldwin de Redvers, earl of Devonshire, was the first to give Stephen a practical proof of his want of foresight in this matter, by telling him, on some slight cause of offence, "that he was not king of right, and he would obey him no longer." Stephen proceeded in person to chastise him. In the mean time David king of Scotland invaded the northern counties, under pretence of revenging the wrong that had been done to his niece, the empress Matilda, by Stephen's usurpation and perjury. Matilda of Boulogne, Stephen's consort, stood in the same degree of relationship to the king of Scotland as the empress Matilda, since her mother, Mary of Scotland, was his sister, no less than Matilda the queen of Henry I. Stephen concluded a hasty peace with the Welsh princes, and advanced to repel the invasion of king David; but when the hostile armies met near Carlisle, he succeeded in adjusting all differences by means of an amicable treaty, perhaps through the entreaties or mediation of his queen.

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[1] Carruthers' History of Scotland, pp. 327, 328.

Easter was kept at Westminster this year, 1137, by Stephen and Matilda, with greater splendour than had ever been seen in the court of Henry Beauclerc, to celebrate the happy termination of the storm that had so lately darkened the political horizon; but the rejoicings of the queen were fearfully interrupted by the alarming illness which suddenly attacked the king, in the midst of the festivities. This illness, the effect no doubt of the preternatural exertions of both mental and corporeal powers, which Stephen had compelled himself to use during the recent momentous crisis of his fortunes, was a sort of stupor or lethargy so nearly resembling death, that it was reported in Normandy that he had breathed his last; on which the party of the empress began to take active measures, both on the continent and in England, for the recognition of her rights.[1] The count of Anjou entered Normandy at the head of an army, to assert the claims of his wife and son, which were, however, disputed by Stephen's elder brother, Theobald count of Blois, not in behalf of Stephen, but himself; while the earl of Gloucester openly declared in favour of his sister the empress, and delivered the keys of Falaise to her husband, Geoffrey of Anjou.[2]

When Stephen recovered from his death-like sickness, he found every thing in confusion,—the attention of his faithful queen, Matilda, having doubtless been absorbed in anxious watchings by his sick bed, during the protracted period of his strange and alarming malady. She was now left to take care of his interests in England as best she might; for Stephen, rousing himself from the pause of exhausted nature, hastened to the continent with his infant heir Eustace, to whom queen Matilda had resigned the earldom of Boulogne, her own fair inheritance. Stephen, by the strong eloquence of an immense bribe, prevailed on Louis VII. of France, as *suzerain* of Normandy, to invest the unconscious babe with the duchy, and to receive his liege homage for the same.[1]

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[1] Hoveden. Brompton. Ordericus Vitalis.

[2] M. Paris, &c. &c.

Meantime, some portentous events occurred during Matilda's government. Sudden and mysterious conflagrations then, as now, indicated the sullen discontent of the very lower order of the English people. On the 3rd of June, 1137, Rochester cathedral was destroyed by fire; the following day, the whole city of York, with its cathedral and thirty churches, was burnt to the ground; soon after, the city of Bath shared the same fate. Then conspiracies began to be formed in favour of the empress Matilda, in various parts of England; and lastly, her uncle, David king of Scotland, once more entered Northumberland, with banners displayed, in support of his supplanted kinswoman's superior title to the crown.[2] Queen Matilda, with courage and energy suited to this alarming crisis, went in person and besieged the insurgents, who had seized Dover-castle; and she sent orders to the men of Boulogne, her loyal subjects, to attack the rebels by sea. The Boulonnois obeyed the commands of their beloved princess with alacrity, and to such good purpose, by covering the Channel with their light-armed vessels, that the besieged, not being able to receive the slightest succour by sea, were forced to submit to the queen.[3] At this juncture Stephen arrived: he succeeded in chastising the leaders of the revolt, and drove the Scottish king over his own border. Nevertheless, the empress Matilda's party, in the year 1138, began to assume a formidable aspect. Every day brought tidings to the court of Stephen of some fresh revolt. William of Malmesbury relates, that when Stephen was informed of these desertions, he passionately exclaimed, "Why did they make me king, if they forsake me thus? By the birth of God![4] I will never be called an abdicated king."

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[1] Ordericus Vitalis. H. Huntingdon. Brompton. M. Paris. Rapin. Speed.

[2] Brompton. Rapin. Ordericus Vitalis.

[3] Ordericus Vitalis.

[4] This was Stephen's usual oath.—Malmesbury.

The invasion of queen Matilda's uncle, David of Scotland, for the third time, increased the distraction of her royal husband's affairs, especially as Stephen was too much occupied with the internal troubles of his kingdom to be able to proceed in person against him. David and his army were, however, defeated with immense slaughter, by the warlike Thurstan, archbishop of York, at Cuton-Moor. The particulars of this engagement, called 'the battle of the Standard,' where the church-militant performed such notable service for the crown, belong to general history, and are besides too well known to require repetition in the biography of Stephen's queen. Matilda[1] was mainly instrumental in negotiating the peace which was concluded this year between her uncle and her lord. Prince Henry, the heir of Scotland, having, at the same time, renewed his homage to Stephen for the earldom of Huntingdon, was invited bv the king to his court. The attention with which the young prince was treated by the king and queen was viewed with invidious eyes by their ill-mannered courtiers · and Ranulph, earl of Chester, took such great offence at the royal stranger being seated above him at dinner, that he made it an excuse for joining the revolted barons, and persuaded a knot of equally uncivilized nobles to follow his example on the same pretence.[2]

The empress Matilda, taking advantage of the fierce contention between Stephen and the hierarchy of England, made her tardy appearance, in pursuance of her claims to the crown, in the autumn of 1130. Like her uncle, Robert the Unready, the empress allowed the critical moment to slip when, by prompt and energetic measures, she might have gained the prize for which she contended. But she did not arrive till Stephen had made himself master of the castles, and, what was of more importance to him, the great wealth of his three refractory prelates, the bishops of Salisbury, Ely, and Lincoln.

When the empress was shut up within the walls of Arundel-castle, Stephen might by one bold stroke have made her his prisoner; but he was prevailed upon to respect the ties of consanguinity, and the high rank of the widow and of the daughter of his benefactor, king Henry. It is possible, too, that recollections of a tenderer nature, with regard to his cousin the empress, might deter him from imperilling her person by pushing the siege. According to some of the chroniclers, the empress sent, with queen Adelicia's request that she might be permitted to retire to Bristol, a guileful letter or message to Stephen,[1] which induced him to promise, on his word of honour, that he would grant her safe-conduct to that city. Though the empress knew that Stephen had violated the most solemn oaths in regard to her succession to the crown, she relied upon his honour, put herself under his protection, and was safely conducted to the castle of Bristol. King Stephen gave to his brother, Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester, and to Walleran earl of Mellent, the charge of escorting the empress to Bristol-castle. This bright trait of chivalry contrasts beautifully with the selfishness and perfidy too prevalent at the era. It was during this journey, in all probability, that Henry de Blois arranged his plans with the empress Matilda for making her mistress of the royal city of Winchester, which was entirely under his influence.

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[1] "Through the mediation of Matilda, the wife of Stephen, and niece of David, a peace was concluded at Durham between these two kings, equitable in itself, and useful to both parties."—Carruthers' History of Scotland, vol. i. p 339.

[2] Speed.

While the earl of Gloucester, on behalf of his sister the empress, was contesting with king Stephen the realm of England at the sword's point, queen Matilda proceeded to France with her son Eustace, to endeavour to strengthen her husband's cause by the aid of her foreign connexions; and while at the court of France, successfully exerted her diplomatic powers in negotiating a marriage between the princess Constance, sister of Louis VII., and prince Eustace, then about four years old. The queen presided at this infant marriage, which was celebrated with great splendour. Instead of receiving a dowry with the princess, queen Matilda paid a large sum to purchase her son the bride; Louis VII. in return solemnly invested his young brother-in-law with the duchy of Normandy, and lent his powerful aid to maintain him there as the nominal sovereign, under the direction of the queen his mother. This alliance, which took place in the year 1140,[1] greatly raised the hopes of Stephen's party; but the bands of foreign mercenaries, which his queen Matilda sent over from Boulogne and the ports of Normandy to his succour, had an injurious effect on his cause, and were beheld with jealous alarm by the people of the land; "whose miseries were in no slight degree aggravated," says the chronicler Gervase, "by the arrival of these hunger-starved wolves, who completed the destruction of the land's felicity."

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[1] Gervase. Henry of Huntingdon.

It was during the absence of queen Matilda and her son prince Eustace, that the battle, so disastrous to her husband's cause, was fought beneath the walls of Lincoln, on Candlemas-day, 1141. Stephen had shut up a great many of the empress Matilda's partisans and their families in the city of Lincoln, which he had been for some time besieging. The earl of Gloucester's youngest daughter, lately married to her cousin Ranulph, earl of Chester, was among the besieged; and so determined were the two earls, her father and her husband, for her deliverance, that they encouraged their followers to swim, or ford, the deep cold waters of the river Trent,[2] behind which Stephen and his army were encamped, and fiercely attacked him in their dripping garments,—and all for the relief of the fair ladies who were trembling within the walls of Lincoln, and beginning to suffer from lack of provisions. These were the days of chivalry, be it remembered.[3] Speed gives us a descriptive catalogue of some of the leading characters among our valiant king Stephen's knights *sans peur*, which, if space were allowed us, we would abstract from the animated harangue with which the earl of Gloucester endeavoured to warm his shivering followers into a virtuous blaze of indignation, after they had emerged from their cold bath.[4] His satirical eloquence was received by the partisans of the empress with a tremendous shout of applause; and Stephen, not to be behind-hand with his foes in bandying personal abuse as a prelude to the fight, as his own powers of articulation happened to be defective, deputed one Baldwin Fitz-Gilbert, a knight who was blessed with a stentorian voice, to thunder forth his recrimination on the earl of Gloucester and his host in the ears of both armies. Fitz-Gilbert, in his speech, laid scornful stress on the illegitimacy of the empress's champion, whom he designated "Robert, the base-born general."[1]

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[1] Florence of Worcester. Tyrrell.

[2] Malmesbury. Rapin. Speed.

[3] Polydore Vergil. Speed. Malmesbury

[4] Roger Hoveden. H. Huntingdon. Polychronicon.

The battle, for which both parties had prepared themselves with such a sharp encounter of keen words, was, to use the expression of contemporary chroniclers, "a very sore one;" but it seems as if Stephen had fought better than his followers that day. "A very strange sight it was," says Matthew Paris, "there to behold king Stephen, left almost alone in the field, yet no man daring to approach him, while, grinding his teeth and foaming like a furious wild boar, he drove back with his battle-axe the assailing squadrons, slaying the foremost of them, to the eternal renown of his courage. If but a hundred like himself had been with him, a whole army had never been able to capture his person; yet, single-handed as he was he held out, till first his battle-axe brake, and afterwards his sword shivered in his grasp with the force of his own resistless blows, though he was borne backward to his knees by a great stone, which by some ignoble person was flung at him. A stout knight, William of Kames, then seized him by the helmet, and holding the point of his sword to his throat, called upon him to surrender."[2] Even in that extremity Stephen refused to give up the fragment of his sword to any one but the earl of Gloucester, his valiant kinsman, who, coming up, bade his infuriated troops refrain from further violence, and conducted his royal captive to the empress Matilda, at Gloucester. The earl of Gloucester, it is said, treated Stephen with some degree of courtesy; but the empress Matilda, whose hatred appears to have emanated from a deeper root of bitterness than mere rivalry of power, loaded him with indignities, and ordered him into the most rigorous confinement in Bristol-castle. According to general historians, she caused him to be heavily ironed, and used the royal captive as ignominiously as if he had been the lowest felon; but William of Malmesbury says, "this was not till after Stephen had attempted to make his escape, or it was reported that he had been seen several times beyond the bounds prescribed for air and exercise."

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[1] Roger Hoveden. H. Huntingdon. Speed.

[2] H. Huntingdon. Speed. Rapin.

The empress Matilda made her public and triumphant entry into the city of Winchester February 7, where she was received with great state by Stephen's equally haughty brother, Henry de Blois, bishop of Winchester and cardinal-legate. He appeared at the head of all the clergy and monks of the diocese; and even the nuns of Winchester[1] (a thing before unheard of) walked unveiled in the procession, to receive and welcome the rightful heiress of the realm, the daughter of the great and learned Henry Fitz-Conqueror, and of Matilda the descendant of the Atheling. The English had also the satisfaction of seeing the male representative of their ancient monarchs on that occasion within the walls of Winchester; for David of Scotland, the son of Margaret Atheling, was present to do honour to his niece,—the victorious rival of Stephen's crown. Henry de Blois resigned the regal ornaments, and the paltry residue of her father's treasure, into the hands of the empress. The next day he received her with great pomp in his cathedral-church, where he excommunicated all the adherents of his unfortunate brother, and promised absolution to all who should abandon his cause and join the empress.[2]

In this melancholy position did queen Matilda find her husband's cause, when she returned from her successful negotiation of the marriage between the French king's sister and her son the little count of Boulogne, whom she had left, for the present, established as duke of Normandy. The peers and clergy had alike abandoned the luckless Stephen in his adversity;[3] and the archbishop of Canterbury, being a man of tender conscience, had actually visited Stephen in his prison,

[1] Rudborne's Hist. of Winchester.

Gesta Stephani. Gervase. Malmesbury. Rapin.

[3] Malmesbury. Huntingdon. Ger. Dor.

to request his permission to transfer his oath of allegiance to his victorious rival the empress Matilda. In this predicament, the faithful consort of the fallen monarch applied herself to the citizens of London, with whom she had ever maintained a great share of popularity. They knew her virtues, for she had lived among them; and her tender affection for her royal spouse in his adversity was well pleasing to those who had witnessed the domestic happiness of the princely pair, while they lived in Tower-Royal as count and countess of Boulogne; and the remembrance of Stephen's free and pleasant conduct, and affable association with all sorts and conditions of men, before he wore the thorny diadem of a doubtful title to the sovereignty of England, disposed the magistracy of London to render every assistance in their power to their unfortunate king.[1] So powerfully, indeed, had the personal influence of queen Matilda operated in that quarter, that when the magistrates of London were summoned to send their deputies to a synod at Winchester, held by Henry de Blois, which had predetermined the election of the empress Matilda to the throne, they instructed them to demand the liberation of the king in the name of the barons and citizens of London, as a preliminary to entering into any discussion with the partisans of his enemy. Henry de Blois replied, "That it did not become the Londoners to side with the adherents of Stephen, whose object was to embroil the kingdom in fresh troubles."[2]

Queen Matilda, finding that the trusty citizens of London were baffled by the priestly subtlety of her husband's brother, Henry de Blois, took the decided, but at that time unprecedented step, of writing in her own name an eloquent letter to the synod, earnestly entreating those in whose hands the government of England was vested to restore the king, her husband, to liberty. This letter the queen's faithful chaplain, Christian, delivered, in full synod, to the legate Henry de Blois. The prelate, after he had silently perused the touching appeal of his royal sister-in-law, not only refused to communicate its purport to the assembly, but, exalting his voice to the highest pitch, proclaimed "that it was illegal and

[1] Malmesbury. Rapin.

Ibid.

improper to be recited in that great assembly, composed as it was of ecclesiastics and dignitaries; for, among other objectionable points, it was witnessed by the signature of a person who had at a former council used insulting language to the bishops." Christian was not thus to be baffled: he boldly took his royal mistress's letter out of the imperious legate's hand, and exalting his voice in turn, so as to be distinctly heard by all present, he read it aloud to the astonished conclave, in spite of the anger and opposition of him who was at that time virtually the ruling power in the realm. The following brief abstract is all that William of Malmesbury, who dedicates his history to the leader of the adverse party, Robert earl of Gloucester, thinks proper to give of Matilda's letter: "The queen earnestly entreats the whole clergy assembled, and especially the bishop of Winchester, the brother of her lord the king, to restore her said lord to his kingdom, whom abandoned persons, even such as were under homage to him, have cast into chains."

The legate endeavoured to frustrate any good effect which this conjugal appeal from the faithful consort of his unfortunate brother might have produced, by dissolving the assembly, having first excommunicated the leading members of the royal party. He then declared "that the empress Matilda was lawfully elected as the domina or sovereign lady of England." The following are the words of the formula in which the declaration was delivered: "Having first, as is fit, invoked the aid of Almighty God, we elect as lady of England and Normandy the daughter of the glorious, the rich, the good, the peaceful king Henry, and to her we promise fealty and support."[1] No word is here of the good old laws—the laws of Alfred and St. Edward, or of the great charter which Henry I. agreed to observe. The empress was the leader of the Norman party, and the head of Norman feudality, which, in many instances, was incompatible with the Saxon constitution. The imperial "domina" bore her honours with any thing but meekness; she refused to listen to the counsel of her friends; she treated those of her adversaries whom misfortune drove to seek her clemency with insolence and cruelty, stripping them of their

[1] Gesta Stephani Regis.

possessions, and rendering them perfectly desperate. The friends who had contributed to her elevation frequently met with a harsh refusal when they asked favours; "and," says an old historian, "when they bowed themselves down before her, she did not rise in return."[1]

Meantime, the sorrowful queen Matilda was unremitting in her exertions for the liberation of her unfortunate lord, who was at this time heavily ironed and ignominiously treated, by order of the empress.[2] Not only England, but Normandy was now lost to the captive monarch her husband and their young heir, prince Eustace; for Geoffrey of Anjou, as soon as he received intelligence of the decisive battle of Lincoln, persuaded the Norman baronage to withdraw their allegiance from their recently invested duke, and to transfer it to his wife the empress and her son Henry, certainly the rightful heirs of William the Conqueror. The loss of regal state and sovereign power was, however, regarded by the queen of Stephen as a matter of little moment. In the season of adversity it was not the king, but the man, the husband of her youth and the father of her children, to whom the tender-hearted Matilda of Boulogne clung, with a devotion not often to be met with in the personal history of royalty. It was for his sake that she condescended to humble herself, by addressing the most lowly entreaties to her haughty cousin, the empress Matilda,—to her who, if the report of some contemporary chroniclers is to be credited, had betrayed her husband into a breach of his marriage vow. The insulting scorn with which the empress rejected every petition which the wedded wife of Stephen presented to her in behalf of her fallen foe, looks like the vindictive spirit of a jealous woman; especially when we reflect, that not only the virtues of Matilda of Boulogne, but the closeness of her consanguinity to herself, required her to be treated with some degree of consideration and respect.

There appears even to be a covert reference to the former position in which these princesses had stood, as rivals in Stephen's love, by the proposal made by his fond queen. She proposed, if his life were but spared, to relinquish his society, and that he should not only for ever forego all claims upon the crown and succession of England and Normandy, but, taking upon himself the vows and habit of a monk, devote himself to a religious life, either as a pilgrim or a cloistered anchorite,[1] on condition that their son, prince Eustace, might be permitted to enjoy, in her right, the earldom of Boulogne, and his father's earldom of Mortagne, the grant of Henry I. Her petition was rejected by the victorious empress with no less contempt than all the others which Stephen's queen had ventured to prefer, although her suit in this instance was backed by the powerful mediation of Henry de Blois. This prelate, who appears to have thought more of peace than of brotherhood, was not only desirous of settling public order on such easy terms for his new sovereign, but willing to secure to his nephew the natural inheritance of his parents, of which the empress's party had obtained possession. So blind, however, was this obdurate princess in pursuing the headlong impulse of her vindictive nature, that nothing could induce her to perceive how much it was her interest to grant the prayer of her unhappy cousin; and she repulsed the suit of Henry de Blois so rudely, that, when next summoned to her presence, he refused to come. Queen Matilda improved this difference between her haughty rival and her brother-in-law to her own advantage; and, having obtained a private interview with him at Guildford, she prevailed on him, by the eloquence of her tears and entreaties, to absolve all her husband's party whom, as pope's legate, he had a few days before excommunicated, and to enter into a negotiation with her for the deliverance of his brother.[2]

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[1] Gesta Stephani Regis. Thierry.

[2] Malmesbury. Speed.

Nor did queen Matilda rest here. In the name of her son, prince Eustace, aided by William of Ypres, Stephen's able but unpopular minister of state, she raised the standard of her captive lord in Kent and Surrey, where a strong party was presently organized in his favour; and finding that there was nothing to be hoped for from her obdurate kinswoman, the empress Matilda, on any other terms but the unreasonable one of giving up her own fair inheritance, she, like a true daughter of the heroic house of Boulogne, and the niece of the illustrious Godfrey and Baldwin, prepared herself for a struggle with such courageous energy of mind and promptitude of action, that many a recreant baron was shamed into quitting the inglorious shelter of his castle, and leading forth his vassals to strengthen the muster of the royal heroine.

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[1] Y-Podigma Neustria. Speed Pepin.

[2] Speed. Tyrrell.

In the pages of superficially written histories, much is said of the prowess and military skill displayed by prince Eustace at this period; but Eustace was scarcely seven years old at the time when these efforts were made for the deliverance of his royal sire. It is therefore plain, to those who reflect on the evidence of dates, that it was the high-minded and prudent queen, his mother, who avoided all Amazonian display by acting under the name of her son. Her feminine virtues, endearing qualities, and conjugal devotion, had already created the most powerful interest in her favour; while reports of the pride and hardness of heart of her stern relative and namesake, the new domina, began to be industriously circulated through the land by the offended legate, Henry de Blois.[1] William of Malmesbury mentions, expressly, that the empress Matilda never bore or received the title of *regina*, or queen of England, but that of *domina*, or lady of England. On her broad seal, which she caused to be made for her royal use at Winchester, she entitles herself "Romanorum Regina Macthildis;" and in a charter granted by her, just after the death of her brother and champion, Robert earl of Gloucester, she styles herself "Regina Romanorum, et Domina Anglorum."

The seal to which we have just alluded bears the figure of the grand-daughter of the Norman conqueror, crowned and seated on the King's-bench, with a sceptre in her right hand, but bearing neither orb nor dove, the symbols of sovereign power and mercy. She was not an anointed queen, neither had the crown-royal ever been placed on her brow.[2] The garland of fleurs-de-lis, by which the folds of her matronly wimple are confined, is of a simpler form than the royal diadems of the Anglo-Norman sovereigns, as shown on the broad seals of William Rufus, Henry I., and Stephen. Probably an alteration would have been made, if the coronation of Matilda, as sovereign of England, had ever taken place. But the consent of the city of London was an indispensable preliminary to her inauguration; and to London she proceeded in person, to obtain this important recognition. Though the majority of the city authorities were disposed to favour the cause of Stephen, for the sake of his popular consort, Matilda of Boulogne, the Saxon citizens, when they heard that "the daughter of Molde, their good queen," claimed their homage, looked with reverence on her elder claim, and threw open their gates to receive her with every manifestation of affection.

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[1] Tyrrell.

[2] We are indebted for a drawing of the impression of another seal pertaining to Matilda the empress, to the kindness of Miss Mary Aglionby, who has elegantly delineated it from a deed belonging to her family. The head-dress of the empress is simpler than that above mentioned, the veil being confined by

The first sentence addressed to them by this haughty claimant of the crown of St. Edward, was the demand of an enormous subsidy. The citizens of London replied by inquiring after the great charter granted by her father. "Ye are very impudent to mention privileges and charters to me, when ye have just been supporting my enemies," was the gracious rejoinder.[1] Her wise and valiant brother, Robert of Gloucester, who stood by her side, immediately perceiving that the citizens of London were incensed at this intimation of their new sovereign's intention to treat them as a conquered people, endeavoured to soothe their offended pride by a conciliatory address, commencing,—"Ye citizens of London, who of olden time were called barons . . . . . ."

Although the heroic Robert was a most complete and graceful orator, his courteous language failed to atone to the Londoners for the arrogance of their new liege lady. Her uncle, king David, was present at this scene, and earnestly persuaded the empress to adopt a more popular line of conduct,

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a mere twisted fillet, such as we see beneath helmets and crests in heraldic blazonry. The inscription, in Roman letters, is S · MATHILDIS · DEI · GRATIA · ROMANORUM · REGINA. The manner of sitting, and the arrangement of the drapery on the knees, resemble the portrait of the mother of the empress described in her biography.

[1] J. P. Andrews.

but in vain.[1] After a strong discussion, the Londoners craved leave to retire to their hall of common council, in order to provide the subsidy.

Meantime, the empress sat down to her midday meal in the banqueting-hall of the new palace at Westminster, in confident expectation that the civic authorities of London would soon approach to offer, on their knees, the bags of gold she had demanded.[2] A dessert of a different kind awaited her, for at that momentous crisis a band of horsemen appeared on the other side of the river, and displayed the banner of Stephen's consort, Matilda of Boulogne. The bells of every church in London rang out a clamorous tocsin, and from every house rushed forth, as had doubtless been previously concerted, one champion at the least, and in many instances several, armed with whatever weapons were at hand, and sallied forth to do battle in defence of the rights and liberties of the city; "just," says the old chronicler, "like bees swarming about the hive when it is attacked." The Norman and Angevin chevaliers, under the command of the valiant earl of Gloucester, found they stood little chance of withstanding this resolute muster of the London patriots in their own narrow crooked streets. They therefore hastened to provide for the safety of their domina. She rose in haste from table, mounted her horse, and fled with her foreign retinue at full speed; and she had urgent cause for haste, for before she had well cleared the western suburb, the populace had burst into the palace, and were plundering her apartments.[3] The fugitives took the road to Oxford; but before the haughty domina arrived there, her train had become so small with numerous desertions, that, with the exception of Robert of Gloucester, she entered it alone.[4]

A strong reaction of popular feeling in favour of Stephen, or rather of Stephen's queen, followed this event. The counties of Kent and Surrey were already her own, and prepared to support her by force of arms; and the citizens of London joyfully received her within their walls once more. Henry de Blois had been induced, more than once, to meet his royal sister-in-law secretly at Guildford. Thither she brought the young prince, her son,[1] to assist her in moving his powerful uncle to lend his aid in replacing her husband on the throne. Henry de Blois, touched by the tears and entreaties of these interesting supplicants, and burning with rage at the insolent treatment he had received from the imperial virago, whom Camden quaintly styles 'a *niggish* old wife,' solemnly promised the queen to forsake the cause of her rival. Immediately on his return to Winchester the prelate fortified his castle, and having prepared all things for declaring himself in favour of his brother, he sent messengers to the queen, begging her to put herself at the head of the Kentishmen and Londoners, and march with her son, prince Eustace, to Winchester.[2]

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[1] Carruthers' Hist. of Scotland, p. 341.

[2] Thierry. Speed. Stowe. Lingard.

[3] Chronicle quoted in Knight's London.

[4] Ibid. Thierry. Lingard. Stowe.

The empress Matilda and the earl of Gloucester having some intelligence of Henry de Blois' proceedings, advanced from Oxford, accompanied by David king of Scotland, at the head of an army, to overawe him. When they approached the walls of Winchester, the empress sent a herald to the legate, requesting a conference, as she had something of importance to communicate; but to this requisition Henry de Blois only replied, "*Parabo me*,"[3] that is, "I will prepare myself;" and finding that the Norman party in Winchester was at present too strong for him, he left the city, and retired to his strong castle in the suburbs, causing, at the same time, so unexpected an attack to be made on the empress, that she had a hard race to gain the shelter of the royal citadel. "To comprise," says William of Malmesbury, "a long series of events within narrow limits, the roads on every side of Winchester were watched by the queen, and the earls who had come with her, lest supplies should be brought in to those who had sworn fidelity to the empress. Andover was burned, and the Londoners having assumed a martial attitude, lent all the assistance they could to distress that princess."[4]

Queen Matilda, with her son and sir William Ypres, at the head of the Londoners and the Kentishmen, were soon after at the gates of Winchester. The empress, now closely blockaded in her palace, had ample cause to repent of her vindictive folly in rousing the energies of her royal cousin's spirit, by repulsing the humble boon she had craved in her despair. For nearly two months the most destructive warfare of famine, fire, and sword was carried on in the streets of Winchester; till the empress Matilda, dreading the balls of fire which were nightly thrown from the legate's castle, and which had already destroyed upwards of twenty stately churches and several monasteries, prevailed on her gallant brother to provide for her retreat. He and her uncle David cut a passage for her through the besiegers at the sword's point. She and her uncle David, king of Scotland, by dint of hard riding escaped to Lutgershall; while the earl of Gloucester arrested the pursuit by battling with them by the way, till almost all his followers being slain, he was compelled to surrender after a desperate defence. This skirmish took place on the 14th of Sept. 1141.

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[1] Tyrrell. [2] Malmesbury. Gervase. [3] Malmesbury. [4] Ibid.

When the earl of Gloucester was presented by his captors to queen Matilda at Winchester, she was transported with joy, beholding in him a security for her beloved consort's safety. She received him courteously, and exerted all her eloquence to persuade him to arrange an amicable treaty for the king's release, in exchange for himself. Gloucester replied, "That would not be a fair equivalent, for," said he, "twenty earls would not be of sufficient importance to ransom a king; how then, lady, can you expect that I should so far forget the interest of the empress, my sister, as to propose that she should exchange him for only one?" Matilda then offered to restore him to all his forfeit honours, and even to bestow the government of the realm on him, provided he would conclude a peace, securing England to Stephen, and Normandy to the empress. But nothing could induce him to swerve in the slightest degree from what he considered his duty to his sister. The queen, finding she could not prevail on him to enter into any arrangement for the restoration of his liberty, then committed him for safe custody to the charge of William of Ypres; "and though she might have remembered," says William of Malmesbury, "that her husband had been fettered by his command, yet she never suffered a bond of any kind to be put upon him, nor presumed on her dignity to treat him dishonourably; and finally, when he was conducted to Rochester, he went freely whenever he wished to the churches below the castle, and conversed with whom he pleased, the queen only being present. After her departure he was held in free custody in the keep; and so calm and serene was his mind, that, receiving money from his vassals in Kent, he bought some valuable horses, which were both serviceable and beneficial to him hereafter."[1]

This generous conduct of Matilda to the man who had done so much injury to her husband and her cause, is imputed by William of Malmesbury to the dignity and merit of the valiant earl, his patron, "whose high bearing," he says, "impressed his enemies with such great respect, that it was impossible to treat him otherwise."[2] A less partial writer would have given the queen due praise for the magnanimity with which she acted, under circumstances that might well have justified the sternest reprisals for his harsh usage of her captive lord; but the fact spoke for itself, and won more hearts for the queen than the wealth of England and Normandy combined could purchase for her haughty namesake and rival.

Meantime the empress, whose safe retreat to Lutgershall had been thus dearly purchased by the loss of her great general's liberty, being hotly pursued by the queen's troops to Devizes, only escaped their vigilance by personating a corpse, wrapped in grave-clothes, and being placed in a coffin, which was bound with cords, and borne on the shoulders of some of her trusty partisans to Gloucester, the stronghold of her valiant brother, where she arrived, faint and weary with long fasting and mortal terror.[3]

Her party was so dispirited by the loss of her approved counsellor and trusty champion, the earl of Gloucester, that she was compelled to make some overtures to the queen, her cousin, for his release. But Matilda would hear of no other terms than the restoration of her captive husband, king Stephen, in exchange for him. This the empress peremptorily refused, in the first instance, though she offered a large sum of gold, and twelve captive earls of Stephen's party, as her brother's ransom. Queen Matilda was inflexible in her determination never to resign this important prisoner on any other condition than the release of her royal husband. As this condition was rejected, she caused the countess of Gloucester to be informed, that unless her terms were accepted, and that speedily, she would send Gloucester to one of her strong castles in Boulogne,[1] there to be kept as rigorously as Stephen had been by the orders of the empress and her party. Not that it was in the gentle nature of the queen to have made these harsh reprisals on a gallant gentleman, whom the fortune of war had placed at her disposal; but as the captive king was incarcerated in Bristol-castle, of which the said countess of Gloucester was the chatellaine, there was sound policy in exciting her conjugal fears. Had it not been for this threat, Stephen would never have regained his liberty, for important as her brother's presence was to the empress, she obdurately refused to purchase his freedom by the release of the king. Fortunately the person of Stephen was in the keeping, not of the vindictive empress, but the countess of Gloucester; and her anxiety for the restoration of her lord led to the arrangement of a sort of private treaty between her and the queen for the exchange of their illustrious prisoners; by which it was agreed, that Stephen should be enlarged forthwith on condition that his queen and son, with two of the leading nobles of his party, should be detained as hostages in Bristol-castle, to ensure his keeping faith by liberating the earl of Gloucester, whose son was to be left in the king's possession at Winchester, as a surety for the release of the queen and prince Eustace.

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[1] William of Malmesbury. [2] Ibid. Dr. Giles's edition.

[3] Brompton. John of Tinemouth. Gervase. Knighton.

Matilda, the most tenderly devoted of conjugal heroines, hesitated not to procure the enfranchisement of her lord by putting herself and her boy into the hands of the countess of Gloucester. This she did on the festival of All Saints, November 1, 1141, on which day Stephen was liberated, and departed from Bristol on his way to Winchester. The earl of Gloucester being brought to him there from Rochester-castle, received his freedom, and on the third day after set out for Bristol, leaving his son with Stephen as a pledge for the release of the queen and prince. Matilda, who had remained a voluntary, but of course a most anxious prisoner in the stronghold of her foes, was emancipated as soon as he arrived, and hastened to rejoin her husband at Winchester, and to send the heir of Gloucester back to his parents. Few episodes in the personal history of royalty are more interesting than this transaction, none better authenticated, being narrated by William of Malmesbury, whose book is dedicated to one of the principal actors engaged in this drama,—his patron, Robert earl of Gloucester.

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[1] Malmesbury.

Queen Matilda was not long permitted to enjoy the re-union which took place between her and her beloved consort, after she had succeeded in procuring his deliverance from the fetters of her vindictive rival; for nothing could induce the empress to listen to any terms of pacification, and the year 1142 commenced with a mutual renewal of hostilities between the belligerent parties. While Stephen was pursuing the war with the fury of a newly enfranchised lion, he was seized with a dangerous malady at Northampton. Matilda hastened to him on the first news of his sickness, which was so sore, that for some hours he was supposed to be dead. In all probability, his illness was a return of the lethargic complaint with which he had once or twice been afflicted at the commencement of the internal troubles of his realm.

Through the tender attentions of his queen, Stephen was recovered, and soon after able to take the field again; which he did with such success, that the empress's party thought it high time to claim the assistance of Geoffrey count of Anjou, who was now exercising the functions of duke of Normandy. Geoffrey, who had certainly been treated by his imperial spouse, her late father king Henry, and her English partisans, as "a fellow of no reckoning," thought proper to stand on ceremony, and required the formality of an invitation, preferred by the earl of Gloucester in person, before he would either come himself, or part with the precious heir of England and Normandy, prince Henry. The empress, impatient to embrace her first-born son, and to obtain the Angevin and Norman succours to strengthen her party, prevailed upon her brother to undertake this mission.

Gloucester left her, as he thought, safe in the almost impregnable castle of Oxford, and embarked for Normandy. As soon as he was gone, Stephen besieged the empress in her stronghold. The want of provisions rendered its fall inevitable, and there was then every hope of concluding the war by the capture of the haughty domina. By a shrewd exercise of female ingenuity, she eluded the vengeance of her exasperated rival. One night she, with only four attendants, clothed in white garments, stole through a postern that opened upon the river Thames, which at that time was thickly frozen over and covered with snow.[1] The white draperies in which the empress and her little train were enveloped from head to foot, prevented the sentinels from distinguishing their persons, as they crept along with noiseless steps under the snow-banks, till they were at a sufficient distance from the castle to exert their speed. They then fled with headlong haste, through the blinding storms that drifted full in their faces, as they scampered over hedges and ditches, and heaps of snow and ice, till they reached Abingdon, a distance of six miles, where they took horse, and arrived safely at Wallingford the same night.[2] The Saxon annals aver that the empress was let down from one of the towers of Oxford-castle by a long rope, and that she fled on foot all the long weary miles to Wallingford. On her arrival there she was welcomed by her brother, Robert of Gloucester, who had just returned from Normandy with her son prince Henry; "at the sight of whom," say the chroniclers, "she was so greatly comforted, that she forgot all her troubles and mortifications for the joy she had of his presence."[3] Thus we see that the sternest natures are accessible to the tender influences of maternal love, powerful in the heart of an empress as in that of a peasant.

Geoffrey count of Anjou, having no great predilection for the company of his Juno, thought proper to remain in Normandy with his son, the younger Geoffrey of Anjou. After three years of civil strife, during which the youthful Henry learned the science of arms under the auspices of his redoubted uncle, the earl of Gloucester, Geoffrey recalled his heir. Earl Robert of Gloucester accompanied his princely *élève* to Wareham, where they parted,[1] never to meet again; for the brave earl died of a fever at Gloucester, October 31, 1147, and was interred at Bristol. With this great man and true-hearted brother died the hopes of the empress Matilda's party for the present, and she soon after quitted England, having alienated all her friends by the ungovernable violence of her temper, and her overweening haughtiness. The great secret of government consists, mainly, in an accurate knowledge of the human heart, by which princes acquire the art of conciliating the affections of those around them, and, by graceful condescensions, win the regard of the lower orders, of whom the great body of the nation, emphatically called 'the people,' is composed. The German education and the self-sufficiency of the empress prevented her from considering the importance of these things, and, as a matter of course, she failed in obtaining the great object for which she contended.

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[1] M. Paris. W. Malmesbury. Sim. Dunelm. Y-Podigma Neustria.

[2] Y-Podigma Neustria. Malmesbury. Speed. Rapin.

[3] Gervase

"Away with her!" was the cry of the English population; "we will not have this Norman woman to reign over us."[2] Yet this unpopular claimant of the throne was the only surviving child and representative of their adored queen Matilda, the daughter of a Saxon princess, the descendant of the great Alfred. But the virtues of Matilda of Scotland, her holy spirit, and her graces of mind and manners had been inherited, not by her daughter, (who was removed in her tender childhood from under the maternal influence,) but by her niece and name-child, Matilda of Boulogne, who had been educated under her auspices. The younger queen Matilda was, however, not only one of the best, but one of the greatest women of the age in which she lived. So perfect was she in that most important of all royal accomplishments—the art of pleasing, that art in which her haughty cousin the empress was entirely deficient,—that her winning influence was acknowledged even by that diplomatic statesman-priest, Henry de Blois; and she was of more effectual service in her husband's cause, than the swords of the foreign army which Stephen had rashly called to the support of his tottering throne.

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[1] Chronicles of Chester, as cited by Tyrrell.

[2] Thierry's Anglo-Norman History

Stephen and Matilda kept their Christmas this year, 1147, at Lincoln, with uncommon splendour, for joy of the departure of their unwelcome kinswoman, the empress Matilda, and the re-establishment of the public peace; and so completely did Stephen consider himself a king again, that, in defiance of certain oracular denouncements of evil to any monarch of England who should venture to wear his crown in that city on Christmas-day, he attended mass in his royal robes and diadem, against the advice of his sagest counsellors, both temporal and spiritual.[1] While at Lincoln, prince Eustace, the son of Stephen and Matilda, (then in his thirteenth year,) received the oath of fealty from such of the barons as could be prevailed upon to acknowledge him as the heir-apparent to the throne. Stephen and Matilda were desirous of his being crowned at Lincoln, in hopes of securing to him the right of succession, but the nobles would not consent.

The mind of queen Matilda appears, during the year 1148, to have been chiefly directed to devotional matters. It was in this year that she carried into execution her long-cherished design of founding and endowing the hospital and church of St. Katherine by the Tower,[2] for the repose of the souls of her deceased children, Baldwin and Maud. The same year queen Matilda, jointly with Stephen, founded the royal abbey of Feversham, in Kent, and personally superintended its erection. For many months she resided in the nunnery of St. Austin's, Canterbury, to watch the progress of the work,[3] it being her desire to be interred within that stately church, which she had planned with such noble taste. There is great probability that she was at this time in declining health, having gone through many sore trials and fatigues, both of mind and body, during the long protracted years of civil war.

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[1] Gervase. Speed.

[2] This royal institution, which under the fostering protection of the queens of England has survived the fall of every other monastic foundation of the olden times, has been transplanted to the Regent's-park, and affords a delightful asylum and ample maintenance for a limited number of those favoured ladies who, preferring a life of maiden meditation and independence to the care-worn paths of matrimony, are fortunate enough to obtain sisterships. A nun of St. Katherine may truly be considered in a state of single blessedness.

[3] Stowe.

The care of this popular queen, that the humbler portion of her subjects should be provided with proper accommodation for their comfort during public worship, caused her to found the noble church of St. Mary at Southampton, of which that faithful antiquary, Leland, gives the following quaint and characteristic particulars:—"There is a chapel of St. Nicholas, a poor and small thing, yet standing, at the east end of St. Marie's church, in the great cemetery, where it is said the old parish church of Old Hampton stood. One told me there, that the littleness of this church was the cause of the erection of the great church of Our Ladye, now standing, by this occasion: one Matilde, queen of England, asked 'What it meant that a great number of people walked about the church of St. Nicholas?' and one answered, 'It is for lack of room in the church.' Then she, *ex voto*, promised to make them a new, and this was the original of St. Marie church. This queen Matilde, or some other good person following, thought to have this made a collegiate church, but this purpose succeed did not fully."[1]

The repose of cloistered seclusion, and heavenward employment in works of piety and benevolence, whereby the royal Matilda sought to charm away the excitement of the late fierce struggle in which she had been forced to take so active a part, were succeeded by fresh anxieties of a political nature, caused by the return of the young Henry Fitz-Empress in the following year (1149), and by the evident intention of her uncle, David of Scotland, to support his claims. The king her husband, apprehending that an attack on the city of York was meditated, flew to arms once more; on which David, after conferring knighthood on his youthful kinsman, retired into Scotland, and prince Henry returned to Normandy, not feeling himself strong enough to bide the event of a battle with Stephen at that period.[1] A brief interval of tranquillity succeeded the departure of these invading kinsmen; but queen Matilda lived not long to enjoy it. Worn out with cares and anxieties, this amiable princess closed her earthly pilgrimage at Heningham-castle in Essex, the mansion of Alberic de Vere, where she died of a fever, May 3rd, 1151, in the fifteenth year of her husband's reign. Stephen was forty-seven years old at the time of this his irreparable loss; Matilda was probably about the same age, or a little younger.

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[1] Leland's Itinerary, vol. iii.; second edition.

This lamented queen was interred in the newly erected abbey of Feversham, of which she had been so munificent a patroness, having endowed it with her own royal manor of Lillechurch, which she gave to William of Ypres for his demesne of Feversham, the spot chosen by her as the site of this noble monastic establishment, which was dedicated to St. Saviour, and filled with black monks of Cluny. The most valued of all the gifts presented by queen Matilda to her favourite abbey, was a portion of the holy cross, which had been sent by her illustrious uncle, Godfrey of Boulogne, from Jerusalem, and was, therefore, regarded as doubly precious, none but heretics presuming to doubt of its being *'vera crux.'*[2] "Here," says that indefatigable antiquary, Weever, "lies interred Maud, wife of king Stephen, the daughter of Eustace earl of Boulogne (brother of Godfrey and Baldwin, kings of Jerusalem) by Mary Atheling, (sister to Matilda Atheling, wife to Henry, her husband's predecessor). She died at Heningham-castle in Essex, the 3rd of May, 1151; whose epitaph I found in a nameless manuscript.

"Anno milleno C. quinquagenoque primo,
  Quo sua non minuit, sed sibi nostra tulit,
Mathildis felix conjux Stephani quoque Regis
  Occidit, insignis moribus et titulis;
Cultrix vera Dei, cultrix et pauperiei.
  Hic subnixa Deo, quo frueretur eo.
Femina si qua Polos conscendere queque meretur,
  Angelicis manibus diva hæc Regina tenetur."

The monastic Latin of this inscription may be thus rendered. "In the year one thousand one hundred and fifty-one, not to her own, but to our great loss, the happy Matilda, the wife of king Stephen, died, ennobled by her virtues as by her titles. She was a true worshipper of God, and a real patroness of the poor. She lived submissive to God, that she might afterwards enjoy his presence. If ever woman deserved to be carried by the hands of angels to heaven, it was this holy queen."

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[1] Roger Hoveden.

[2] Robert of Gloucester.

Queen Matilda left three surviving children by her marriage with Stephen: Eustace, William, and Mary. The eldest, prince Eustace, was, after her death, despatched by Stephen to the court of his royal brother-in-law, Louis VII., to solicit his assistance in recovering the duchy of Normandy, which, on the death of Geoffrey of Anjou, had reverted to Henry Fitz-Empress, the rightful heir. Louis, who had good reason for displeasure against Henry, re-invested Eustace with the duchy, and received his homage once more. Stephen then, in the hope of securing this beloved son's succession to the English throne, endeavoured to prevail on the archbishop of Canterbury to crown him as the acknowledged heir of England. But neither the archbishop, nor any other prelate, could be induced to perform this ceremony, lest, as they said, "they should be the means of involving the kingdom once more in the horrors of civil war."[1] According to some historians, Stephen was so exasperated at this refusal, that he shut all the bishops up in one house, declaring his intention to keep them in ward till one or other of them yielded obedience to his will. The archbishop of Canterbury, however, succeeded in making his escape to Normandy, and persuaded Henry Plantagenet, who, by his marriage with Eleanor duchess of Aquitaine, the divorced queen of France, had become a powerful prince, to try his fortune once more in England.

Henry, who had now assumed the titles of duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and count of Anjou, landed in England, January 1153, before preparations were made to oppose his victorious progress. He marched directly to the relief of his mother's friends at Wallingford, and arrived at a time when Eustace was carrying on operations in the absence of the king his father, who had gone to London to procure fresh supplies of men and money. Eustace maintained his position till the return of Stephen, when the hostile armies drew up in battle-array, with the intention of deciding the question between the rival claimants of the crown, at swords' points. An accidental circumstance prevented the deadly effusion of kindred blood from staining the snows of the wintry plain of Egilaw. "That day Stephen's horse," says Matthew Paris, "reared furiously thrice, as he advanced to the front to array his battle, and thrice fell with his fore-feet flat to the earth, and threw his royal rider. The nobles exclaimed it was a portent of evil, and the men murmured among themselves;[1] on which the great William de Albini, the widower of the late dowager-queen Adelicia, took advantage of the pause which this superstitious panic on the part of Stephen's adherents had created, to address the king on the horrors of civil war; and reminding him of the weakness of his cause, and the justice of that of his opponent, implored him to avoid the slaughter of his subjects, by entering into an amicable arrangement with Henry Plantagenet."

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[1] Rapin.

Stephen and Henry accordingly met for a personal conference in a meadow at Wallingford, with the river Thames flowing between their armies, and there settled the terms of pacification; whereby Stephen was to enjoy the crown during his life, on condition of solemnly guaranteeing the succession to Henry Plantagenet, to the exclusion of his own children.[2] Henry, on his part, swore to confirm to them the earldom of Boulogne, the inheritance of their mother, the late queen Matilda, and all the personal property and possessions enjoyed by Stephen during the reign of his uncle, Henry I. After the treaty was ratified, William de Albini first affixing his sign manual, as the head of the barons, by the style and title of William earl of Chichester,[3] Stephen unbraced his armour in token of peace, and Henry saluted him as 'king,' adding the endearing name of 'father;' and if Polydore Vergil and other chroniclers who relate this incident are to be believed, not without good reason.

Of a more romantic character, however, is the circumstantial account of the cause of this pacification, as related by that courtly historian Matthew Paris, which, though he only mentions it as a report, is of too remarkable a nature to be omitted here. We give the passage in his own words: "The empress, they say, who had rather have been Stephen's paramour than his foe, when she saw him and her son arrayed against each other, and their armies ready to engage on Egilaw-Heath, caused king Stephen to be called aside, and coming boldly up to him, she said, 'What mischievous and unnatural thing go ye about to do? Is it meet the father should destroy the son, or the son to kill the sire? For the love of the most high God, fling down your weapons from your hands, sith that (as thou well knowest) he is indeed thine own son: for you well know how we twain were acquaint before I wedded Geoffrey!' The king knew her words to be sooth, and so came the peace."[1]

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[1] Henry of Huntingdon. Lord Lyttelton. Speed. Tierney's Arundel.

[2] Tierney's Arundel. Matthew Paris. Speed.

[3] Tierney's Arundel.

No other historian records that the empress was in England at this period, much less that she was the author of the pacification. Lord Lyttelton, however, in his history of Henry II., says, "that at one of his interviews with Stephen, previous to the settlement of the succession on Henry, that prince is stated by an old author to have claimed the king for his father, on the confession of the empress, when she supposed herself to be on a death-bed." Rapin also mentions the report. That which lends most colour to the tale is the fact, that the empress Matilda's second son Geoffrey, on the death of his father, set up a claim to the earldom of Anjou, grounded on the supposed illegitimacy of prince Henry. The ungracious youth even went so far as to obtain the testimony of the Angevin barons, who witnessed the last moments of the count his father, to the assertion "that the expiring Geoffrey, named him as the successor to his dominions, because he suspected his elder brother to be the son of Stephen."[2]

Prince Eustace was so much enraged at the manner in which his interests had been compromised by the treaty of Wallingford, that he withdrew in a transport of indignation from the field; and gathering together a sort of free company of the malcontent adherents of his father's party, he marched towards Bury St. Edmund's, ravaging and laying under contribution all the country through which he passed. The monks of Bury received him honourably, and offered to refresh his men; but he sternly replied, "That he came not for meat but money," and demanded a subsidy, which being denied by the brethren of St. Edmund,—"they being unwilling," they said, "to be the means of raising fresh civil wars, which fell heavily on all peacefully disposed men, but heaviest of all on the clergy,"—Eustace, reckless of all moral restraints, instantly plundered the monastery, and ordered all the corn and other provisions belonging to these civil and hospitable ecclesiastics to be carried to his own castle, near the town; and "then sitting down to dinner in a frenzy of rage, the first morsel of meat he essayed to swallow choked him," says the chronicler who relates this act of wrong and violence. According to other historians, Eustace died of a brain fever on the 10th of August, 1153.[1] His body was conveyed to Feversham-abbey, and was interred by the side of his mother, queen Matilda. Eustace left no children by his wife, Constance of France.

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[1] Matthew Paris.

[2] Vita Gaufredi de Normandi.

William, the third son of Stephen and Matilda, inherited his mother's earldom of Boulogne, which, together with that of Mortagne, and all his father's private property, were secured to him by the treaty of Wallingford. He is mentioned in that treaty by name, as having done homage to Henry of Anjou and Normandy. Shortly afterwards, however, this prince, though of tender age, entered into a conspiracy with some of the Flemish mercenaries, to surprise the person of prince Henry on Barham-downs, as he was riding from Dover in company with the king. Stephen himself is not wholly clear from a suspicion of being concerned in this plot, which failed through an accident which befell prince William; for just before the assault should have taken place, he was thrown by his mettlesome steed, and had the ill luck to break his leg. Henry, on receiving a secret hint of what was in agitation, took the opportunity of the confusion created by

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[1] Speed.

William's fall to ride off at full speed to Canterbury, and soon after sailed for Normandy. It does not appear that he bore any ill-will against William de Blois for this treacherous design, as he afterwards knighted him, and confirmed to him his mother's earldom, and whatever was possessed by Stephen before his accession to the throne. This prince died in the year 1160, while attending Henry II. on his return home from the siege of Thoulouse.

The lady Marie de Blois, the only surviving daughter of Stephen and Matilda, took the veil, and was abbess of the royal nunnery of Romsey, in which her grandmother, Mary of Scotland, and her great aunt, Matilda the good queen, were educated. When her brother William count of Boulogne died without issue, the people of Boulogne, desiring to have her for their countess, Matthew, the brother of Philip count of Flanders, stole her from her convent, and marrying her, became in her right count of Boulogne. She was his wife ten years, when, by sentence of the pope, she was divorced from him, and forced to return to her monastery. She had two daughters by this marriage, who were allowed to be legitimate; and Ida, the eldest, inherited the earldom of Boulogne, in right of her grandmother Matilda, Stephen's queen.

Stephen died at Dover, of the iliac passion, October 25th, 1154, in the fifty-first year of his age, and the nineteenth of his reign. He was buried by the side of his beloved queen Matilda, and their unfortunate son Eustace, in the abbey of Feversham. "His body rested here in quietness," says Stowe, "till the dissolution; when, for the trifling gain of the lead in which it was lapped, it was taken up, uncoffined, and plunged into the river,—so uncertain is man, yea, the greatest princes, of any rest in this world, even in the matter of burial." Honest old Speed, by way of conclusion to this quotation from his brother chronicler, adds this anathema: "And restless may their bodies be also, who, for filthy lucre, thus deny the dead the quiet of their graves!"

A noble monument of Stephen and Matilda still survives the storms and changes of the last seven centuries,—the ruins of Furness-abbey. That choicest gem of the exquisite ecclesiastical architecture of the twelfth century was founded, in conjugal unity of purpose, by them soon after their marriage, July 1st, 1127, when only earl and countess of Boulogne. On acquiring the superior rank and power of king and queen of England, they gave additional gifts and immunities to this abbey. The transferred brotherhood of St. Benedict, who were thus enabled by the munificence of the royal pair to plant a church and monastic establishment of unrivalled grandeur in the sequestered valley of Bekansgill, or the vale of 'the deadly nightshade,' as that spot was then called in Lancashire, were not occupied merely in singing and praying for the souls of their august founders and their children, although the customs of that age rendered the performance of these offices an indispensable obligation on the part of the community, in return for endowments of lands, but the real objects for which the monks of Furness were rendered recipients of the bounty of Matilda and her lord were the civilization and cultivation of the wildest district of England. Whatever evils might result in after ages from the abuses which a despotic theocracy introduced into their practice, the statistic benefits conferred by these English fathers of the desert on the country were undeniable. They drained morasses, cleared jungles,—the haunts of wild beasts and robbers, and converted them into rich pastures and arable lands; while they taught a barbarous and predatory population to provide honestly for the wants of life by the practice of agriculture and the various handicrafts which a progressive state of society renders necessary, and even instructed those who possessed capabilities for higher pursuits, in the arts and sciences, which expand the intellect while they employ the mechanical powers of men.

The extensive remains of Furness-abbey, its clustered columns, glorious arches, elaborately wrought corbels, delicate traceries, sublime elevations, and harmonious proportions, tell their own tale, not only of the perfection to which architecture and sculpture were carried under the auspices of the accomplished Matilda of Boulogne, but of the employment afforded to numerous bands of workmen in various branches during the erection of such a fabric. The busts of the royal founder and foundress still remain on either side the lofty chancel window. Noble works of art they are, full of life-like individuality, and extremely characteristic of the persons they represent. Stephen is a model of manly beauty, with a bold and majestic aspect. They both wear their royal diadems. There is a chaste simplicity truly classical in Matilda's attitude and costume. Her veil flows from beneath the royal circlet in graceful folds on either side her softly-moulded oval face. Her dress fits closely to her shape, and is ornamented in front with a mullet-shaped brooch. Her features are delicate and feminine, her expression sweet and modest, yet indicative of conscious dignity, and sufficiently touched with melancholy to remind us of the thorns which beset her queenly garland, during her severe struggles to support the defective title of her consort to the sovereignty of England. The portrait of Matilda which illustrates this biography is engraved from a drawing made expressly for that purpose from the bust at Furness-abbey which we have just described, being the only contemporary memorial which preserves to posterity an authentic representation of this most interesting queen and admirable woman.

ra of Aquitaine.

ELEANORA OF AQUITAINE,

QUEEN OF HENRY II.

CHAPTER I.

Provençal queens—Country of Eleanora of Aquitaine—Her grandfather—Death of her father—Her great inheritance—Marriage—Becomes queen of France—Beauty—She joins the crusaders—Her guard of Amazons—Eleanora and ladies encumber the army—Occasion defeat—Refuge with queen's uncle—Eleanora's coquetries—Returns to France—Her disgusts—Taunts—Henry Plantagenet—Scandals—Birth of infant princess—Eleanora falls in love with Henry—Jealousies—She applies for divorce—Her marriage dissolved—Returns to Aquitaine—Adventures on journey—Marries Henry Plantagenet—Birth of her son—Enables Henry to gain England—Henry's love for Rosamond—Returns to Eleanora—Succeeds to the English throne—Eleanora crowned at Westminster—Costume—Birth of prince Henry—Queen presents her infants to the barons—Death of her eldest son—Her court—Tragedy played before her—Her husband—His character—Rosamond discovered by the queen—Eleanora's children—Birth of prince Geoffrey—Eleanora regent of England—Goes to Normandy—Conclusion of empress Matilda's memoir—Matilda regent of Normandy—Mediates peace—Dies—Her tomb—Eleanora Norman regent—She goes to Aquitaine.

Hereditary sovereign of Aquitaine, by her first marriage queen of France, then queen-consort of Henry II., and subsequently regent of his realms,—how many regalities did Eleanora of Aquitaine unite in her own person! England, by means of the marriage of her king and Eleanora, formed a close alliance with the most polished and civilized people on the face of the earth, as the Provençals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries undoubtedly were. With the arts, the idealities, and the refinements of life, Eleanora brought acquisitions of more importance to the Anglo-Norman people than even that "great Provence dower," on which Dante dwells with such earnestness.

But before the sweet provinces of the South were united to England by the marriage of their heiress with the heir of the Conqueror, a varied tissue of incidents had chequered the life of the duchess of Aquitaine, and it is necessary to trace them before we can describe her conduct as queen of England. It would be in vain to search on a map for the dominions of Eleanora, under the title of dukedom of Aquitaine. In the eleventh century, the counties of Guienne and Gascony were erected into this dukedom, after the ancient kingdom of Provence, established by a diet of Charlemagne,[1] had been dismembered. Julius Cæsar calls the south of Gaul Aquitaine, from the numerous rivers and fine ports belonging to it; and the poetical population of this district adopted the name for their dukedom from the classics.

The language which prevailed all over the south of France was called Provençal, from the kingdom of Provence; and it formed a bond of national union among the numerous independent sovereigns under whose feudal sway this beautiful country was divided. Throughout the whole tract of country, from Navarre to the dominions of the dauphin of Auvergne, and from sea to sea, the Provençal language was spoken,—a language which combined the best points of French and Italian, and presented peculiar facilities for poetical composition. It was called the *langue d'oc*, sometimes *langue d'oc et no*, the tongue of 'yes' and 'no;' because, instead of the *oui* and *non* of the rest of France, the affirmative and negative were *oc* and *no*. The ancestors of Eleanora were called *par excellence* the lords of '*Oc*' and '*No*.' William IX., her grandfather, was one of the earliest professors and most liberal patrons of the art. His poems were models of imitation for all the succeeding troubadours.[2]

The descendants of this minstrel hero were Eleanora and her sister Petronilla: they were the daughters of his son, William count de Poitou. William of Poitou was a pious prince, which, together with his death in the Holy Land, caused his father's subjects to call him St. William. The mother of this prince was the great heiress Philippa[1] of Thoulouse, duchess of Guienne and Gascony, and countess of Thoulouse in her own right. Before Philippa married, her husband was William the seventh count of Poitou and Saintonge; afterwards he called himself William IV. duke of Aquitaine. He invested his eldest son with the county of Poitou, who is termed William X. of Poitou. This prince, the father of Eleanora, did not live to inherit the united provinces of Poitou and Aquitaine, which comprised nearly the whole of the south of France; his wife, Eleanora of Chatelherault, died in early life, in 1129.

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[1] Atlas Géographique.

[2] Sismondi's Literature of the South.

The father of Eleanora left Aquitaine in 1132, with his younger brother, Raymond of Poitou, who was chosen by the princes of the crusade that year to receive the hand of the heiress of Conrad prince of Antioch, and maintain that bulwark of the Holy Land against the assaults of pagans and infidels. William fell, aiding his brother in this arduous contest; but Raymond succeeded in establishing himself as prince of Antioch. The rich inheritance of Thoulouse, part of the dower of the duchess Philippa, had been pawned for a sum of money to the count of St. Gilles, her cousin, which enabled her son to undertake the expense of the crusade led by Robert of Normandy. The count St. Gilles took possession of Thoulouse, and withheld it, as a forfeited mortgage, from Eleanora, who finally inherited her grandmother's rights to this lovely province.

The grandfather of Eleanora had been gay, and even licentious, in his youth; and now, at the age of sixty-eight, he wished to devote some time, before his death, to penitence for the sins of his early life. When his grand-daughter had attained her fourteenth year, he commenced his career of self-denial, by summoning the baronage of Aquitaine and communicating his intention of abdicating in favour of his grand-daughter, to whom they all took the oath of allegiance.[2] He then opened his great project of uniting Aquitaine with France, by giving Eleanora in marriage to the heir of Louis VI. The barons agreed to this proposal, on condition that the laws and customs of Aquitaine should be held inviolate, and that the consent of the young princess should be obtained. Eleanora had an interview with her suitor, and professed herself pleased with the arrangement.

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[1] She is likewise called Matilda.—Rer. Script. de Franc.

[2] Suger. Ordericus Vitalis.

It was abbot Suger,[1] the wise premier of France, who had earnestly promoted the marriage of the crowned heir of his royal master Louis VI. with Eleanora of Aquitaine, in hopes of peacefully uniting the rich provinces of the South with the rest of the Gallic empire. According to the custom of the earlier Capetian monarchs, the peers of France recognised the heir of France as their king just before the death of his royal sire. From thence the spouse of Eleanora was surnamed Louis le Jeune, to distinguish him from his father, as he was called Louis VII. while Louis VI. was not only in existence, but reigning.

Suger, by the desire of the elder king Louis, who was declining in health, accompanied Louis le Jeune to Bourdeaux, in order that this important marriage might be solemnized as speedily as possible; the heir of France was attended by his two kinsmen, the warlike prince of Vermandois, and Thibaut the poet, count of Champagne.

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[1] This great minister being intimately connected with the future destiny of Eleanora of Aquitaine, a sketch of his life is desirable for purposes of perspicuity. Suger was, according to his own account, the son of indigent peasants, dependent on the great abbey of St. Denis, near Paris. Being a promising child, he served at the altar as acolyte, and showing great aptness for the partial education given to those servitors, he received further instruction from his benefactor, abbot Adam, and finally became one of the most learned monks of the Benedictine order. Philippe I. king of France, although at mortal feud with the church, on account of its opposition to his tyrannical divorce from his queen Bertha, confided the education of his second son Louis to the Benedictines of St. Denis; and here a firm friendship was established between the son of the king, and Suger son of the serf. By a strange accident, the heir of Philippe I. was killed at the chase, and the friend of Suger became Louis VI. king of France. Then he effected, with the aid of his friend abbot Suger, those remarkable reforms in church and state, which occasion historians to reckon his reign among those of the greatest monarchs of France. Suger educated Louis VII., and after his accession governed France as prime-minister, and then as regent, and again as prime-minister. Suger, although an ecclesiastic, had sufficient wisdom to moderate, rather than encourage, the tendency to ascetic bigotry in the character and conduct of the husband of Eleanora of Aquitaine, his royal pupil and master, Louis VII.—Vie de Suger, par M. d'Auvigny. Paris, 1739.

Louis and Eleanora were immediately married, with great pomp, at Bourdeaux; and, on the solemn resignation of duke William, the youthful pair were crowned duke and duchess of Aquitaine, August 1, 1137. On the conclusion of this grand ceremony, duke William,[1] grandsire of the bride, laid down his robes and insignia of sovereignty, and took up the hermit's cowl and staff. He departed on a pilgrimage to St. James's of Compostella in Spain, and died soon after, very penitent, in one of the cells of that rocky wilderness.[2]

At the time when duke William resigned the dominions of the South to his grand-daughter, he was the most powerful prince in Europe. His rich ports of Bourdeaux and Saintonge supplied him with commercial wealth; his maritime power was immense; his court was the focus of learning and luxury; and it must be owned that, at the accession of the fair Eleanora, this court had become not a little licentious.

Louis and his bride obtained immediate possession of Poitou, Gascony, Biscay, and a large territory extending beyond the Pyrenees. The very day of the threefold solemnity of this abdication, and of the marriage and coronation of Eleanora, the news arrived that the reigning sovereign of France was struck by death, and that Louis and his young bride would be actually king and queen of France before the important day of August 1, 1137, came to a close. The bride and bridegroom were urged by the minister, Suger, to set off for Paris. They accordingly commenced their journey from Bourdeaux with all their court; they passed through Orleans, and calmed some *émeutes* of the French people on the road.[1] The death of the reigning king, Louis VI., is usually dated August 1st; but that was, in all probability, the day on which, simultaneously with his contemporary, duke William of Aquitaine, he laid down his royal power in favour of his successor. Louis VI. had, however, but a few days to live: it is expressly declared that he was alive at the time when the royal bride and bridegroom arrived at the abbey of St. Denis. Here they were admitted to the death-bed of this great sovereign, who addressed them in these memorable words: "Remember! royalty is a public trust, for the exercise of which a rigorous account will be exacted by Him who has the sole disposal of crowns and sceptres." So spoke the great legislator of France to the youthful pair, whose wedlock had united the north and south of France. On the conscientious mind of Louis VII. the words of his dying father were strongly impressed, but it was late in life before his thoughtless partner profited by them.

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[1] Montaigne, who speaks from his own local traditions of the South, asserts that duke William lived in his hermitage at Montserrat ten or twelve years, wearing, as a penance for his youthful sins, his armour under his hermit's weeds. It is said by others, that he died as a hermit in a grotto at Florence, after having macerated his body by tremendous penances, and established the severe order of the Guillemines. Some historians call him St. William; others give that holy prefix to the name of his son, who died in the crusades eleven years before the abdication of his sire.

[2] To this great prince, the ancestor, through Eleanora of Aquitaine, of our royal line, may be traced armorial bearings, and a war-cry whose origin has not a little perplexed the readers of English history. The patron saint of England, St. George, was adopted from the Aquitaine dukes, as we find, from the MS. of the French herald, Gilles de Bonnier, that the duke of Aquitaine's *mot*, or war-cry, was "St. George for the puissant duke." His crest was a leopard, and his descendants in England bore leopards on their shields till after the time of Edward I. Edward III. is called 'valiant pard' in his epitaphs; and the emperor of Germany sent Henry III. a present of three leopards, expressly saying they were in compliment and allusion to his armorial bearings.

Louis VII. and queen Eleanora made a most magnificent entry into Paris from St. Denis, after the funeral rites of Louis VI. were performed. Probably the practice kept up by the new-married queens of France, of always making a public entry from St. Denis into the capital, originated at this important crisis. The influence the young queen soon acquired, speedily plunged her husband and France into bloody wars. She insisted on her relative, Raymond count of Thoulouse, being forced to acknowledge her sovereignty over that province. The prime-minister of France, Suger, examined into the justice of her claims, and then informed her that her kinsman had fully proved that he held 'a good bill of sale' for Thoulouse. Suger therefore advised his royal master not to interfere; as, if the justice of the case had been on the side of queen Eleanora, it was unwise to incur the expense of a war at the commencement of a new reign. Eleanora, however, prevailed with her royal lord: the war was undertaken, and proved unsuccessful.

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[1] Vie de Suger.

Eleanora was very beautiful; she had been reared in all the accomplishments of the South; she was a fine musician, and composed and sang the *chansons* and *tensons* of Provençal poetry. Her native troubadours expressly inform us that she could both read and write. The government of her dominions was in her own hands, and she frequently resided in her native capital of Bourdeaux. She was perfectly adored by her southern subjects, who always welcomed her with joy, and bitterly mourned her absence when she was obliged to return to her court at Paris,—a court whose morals were severe; where the rigid rule of St. Bernard was observed by the king her husband, as if his palace had been a convent. Far different was the rule of Eleanora in the cities of the South.

The political sovereignty of her native dominions was not the only authority exercised by Eleanora in 'gay Guienne.' She was, by hereditary right, chief reviewer and critic of the poets of Provence. At certain festivals held by her, after the custom of her ancestors,[1] called Courts of Love, all new *sirventes* and *chansons* were sung or recited before her by the troubadours. She then, assisted by a conclave of her ladies, sat in judgment, and pronounced sentence on their literary merits. She was herself a popular troubadour poet. Her chansons were remembered long after death had raised a barrier against flattery, and she is reckoned among the authors of France.[2] The decisions of the young duchess-queen in her troubadour Courts of Love, have met with the reprobation of modern French historians,[3] on account of their immorality, they charge her with avowing the startling opinion, that no true love could exist between married persons; and it is certain, that the encouragement she gave to her sister Petronilla[4] and the count Raoul of Vermandois, offered too soon a practical illustration of these evil principles.

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[1] Sismondi.

[2] Nostradamus, History of Provence. Du Chesne.

[3] Michelet, History of France.

[4] This young princess is called Alice and Pernelle, as well as Petronilla. One of these names was her poetical cognomen, by which her native poets, the

The amusements of queen Eleanora seemed little suited to the austere habits of Louis VII.; yet she had the power of influencing him to commit the only act of wilful injustice which stains the annals of his reign. Petronilla had made acquaintance with Raoul count of Vermandois at the magnificent festival at Bourdeaux, which comprised her royal sister's marriage and coronation. The beauty of Petronilla equalled that of queen Eleanora, but the young princess carried into practice her sister's avowed principles, and seduced Raoul of Vermandois from his wife. This prince had married a sister of the count of Champagne, whom he divorced for some frivolous pretext, and married, by queen Eleanora's connivance, Petronilla. The count of Champagne laid his sister's wrongs before the pope, who commanded Vermandois to put away Petronilla, and to take back the injured sister of Champagne. Queen Eleanora, enraged at the dishonour of Petronilla, prevailed on her husband to punish the count of Champagne for his interference. Louis VII., who already had cause of offence against the count, invaded Champagne at the head of a large army, and began a devastating war, in the course of which a most dreadful occurrence happened at the storming of Vitry: the cathedral, wherein thirteen hundred persons had taken refuge, was burnt, and the poor people perished miserably. Abbé Suger, having in the question of the Thoulouse war experienced the evil influence of the young queen, had resigned his administration, and retired to his abbey of St. Denis; there he superintended the building of that beautiful structure, which is still the admiration of Europe. But when the dreadful slaughter at Vitry took place, Suger was roused by the reproofs of his friend St. Bernard, who declared him to be responsible for all the ill, since Louis VII. had previously always acted by his advice. Suger in vain pleaded that his king had now a bosom counsellor, who privately traversed his best advice; that he had striven against her influence to the verge of hostility with his king, and

troubadours, celebrated her. The countess of Thoulouse, grandmother of this frail damsel, had likewise two names, neither of them conventual or saintly appellations, although she sought retirement in a convent after being divorced.

had retired, when he found he could do no good, to his duties as abbot, leaving the giddy Eleanora to reap the fruit she had planted.[1]

It was at this juncture that St. Bernard preached the crusade at Vezalai, in Burgundy. King Louis and queen Eleanora, with all their court, came to hear the eloquent saint; and such crowds attended the royal auditors, that St. Bernard was forced to preach in the market-place, for no cathedral, however large, could contain them. St. Bernard touched with so much eloquence on the murderous conflagration at Vitry, that the heart of the pious king Louis, full of penitence for the sad effects of his destructiveness on his own subjects, resolved to atone for it to the God of mercy, by carrying sword and fire to destroy thousands of his fellow-creatures, who had neither offended him, nor even heard of him. His queen, whose influence had led to the misdeed at Vitry, likewise became penitent, and as sovereign of Aquitaine vowed to accompany her lord to the Holy Land, and lead the forces of the South to the relief of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem. The wise and excellent Suger endeavoured to prevail on his royal master to relinquish his mad expedition to Syria, assuring him that it would bring ruin on his country; he entreated him to stay and govern his dominions, and if the crusade must be undertaken, to permit the hot-headed young nobility to lead their vassals to the East without him. But the fanaticism of the king was proof against such persuasions: moreover, the romantic idea of becoming a female crusader had got into the light head of Eleanora his queen. Louis was dubious whether to take his queen on this expedition; but as Suger was to be left regent of France during the crusade, he persuaded his royal master not to oppose her inclinations.[2] Nor can it excite wonder that, if Louis VII. would go crusading against all reasonable advice, his wise prime-minister should wish him to take his troublesome partner in regality with him. Eleanora was sovereign of the South, with all its riches and maritime power; and when the specimens she had already given of her impracticable conduct are remembered, it will be allowed that small chance had chancellor Suger's regency of peace and quiet, if the queen remained at home.

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[1] Vie de Suger.

[2] Ibid.

When queen Eleanora received the cross from St. Bernard, at Vezalai, she directly put on the dress of an Amazon; and her ladies, all actuated by the same frenzy, mounted on horseback, and forming a lightly armed squadron, surrounded the queen when she appeared in public, calling themselves queen Eleanora's body-guard. They practised Amazonian exercises, and performed a thousand follies in public, to animate their zeal as practical crusaders. By the suggestion of their young queen, this band of mad-women sent their useless distaffs, as presents, to all the knights and nobles who had the good sense to keep out of the crusading expedition. This ingenious taunt had the effect of shaming many wise men out of their better resolutions; and to such a degree was this mania of the crusade carried, that, as St. Bernard himself owns, whole villages were deserted by their male inhabitants, and the land left to be tilled by women and children. It was on the Whit-Sunday of 1147 that, all matters being ready for marching to the south of France, Louis VII. received the oriflamme[1] from the hands of the pope himself at the abbey of St. Denis, and set forward after the Whit-holidays on his ill-advised expedition. Such fellow-soldiers as queen Eleanora and her Amazons would have been quite sufficient to disconcert the plans and impede the projects of Hannibal himself; and though king Louis conducted himself with great ability and courage in his difficult enterprise, no prudence could counteract the misfortune of being encumbered with an army of fantastic women. King Louis, following the course of the emperor Conrad, whose army, roused by the eloquence of St. Bernard, had just preceded them, sailed up the Bosphorus, and landed in Thrace.

The freaks of queen Eleanora and her female warriors were the cause of all the misfortunes that befell king Louis and his army, especially in the defeat at Laodicea.[1] The king had sent forward the queen and her ladies, escorted by his choicest troops, under the guard of count Maurienne. He charged them to choose for their camp the arid but commanding ground which gave them a view over the defiles of the valley of Laodicea. While this detachment was encamping, he, at the distance of five miles, brought up the rear and baggage, ever and anon turning to battle bravely with the skirmishing Arab cavalry, who were harassing his march. Queen Eleanora acted in direct opposition to his rational directions. She insisted on her detachment of the army halting in a lovely romantic valley, full of verdant grass and gushing fountains. The king was encumbered by the immense baggage which, William of Tyre declares, the female warriors of queen Eleanora persisted in retaining in the camp at all risks. Darkness began to fall as the king of France approached the entrance to the valley; and, to his consternation, he found the heights above it unoccupied by the advanced body of his troops. Neither the queen nor her forces being encamped there, he was forced to enter the valley in search of her, and was soon after attacked from the heights by swarms of Arabs, who engaged him in the passes among the rocks, close to the fatal spot where the emperor Conrad and his heavy horse had been discomfited but a few weeks before. King Louis, sorely pressed in one part of this murderous engagement, only saved his life by climbing a tree, whence he defended himself with the most desperate valour.[2] At length, by efforts of personal heroism, he succeeded in placing himself between the detachment of his ladies and the Saracens. But it was not till the dawn of day that he discovered his advanced troops, encamped in the romantic valley chosen by his poetical queen. Seven thousand of the flower of French chivalry paid with their lives the penalty of their queen's inexperience in warlike tactics; all the provision was cut off; the baggage containing the fine array of the lady-warriors, which had proved such an encumbrance to the king, was plundered by the Arabs and Saracens; and the whole army was reduced to great distress. Fortunately Antioch was near, whose prince was the uncle of the crusading queen of France. Prince Raymond opened his friendly gates to the distressed warriors of the cross, and by the beautiful streams of the Orontes the defeated French army rested and refreshed themselves after their recent disasters.

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[1] The place of this standard, so celebrated in the history of France, is over the high altar of St. Denis, where its representative hangs now, or at least it did in the summer of 1844, then seen by the authors of this work. An older oriflamme, which is supposed to be coeval with the days of our Henry VI., is shown in the treasury of St. Denis: the colour is, or has been, a bright red, the texture shot with gold. It is a horizontal flag, wedge-shaped, but cut into a swallow-tail at the end. It appears to have hung on a cross-bar at the top of the flag-staff, and has rings to be attached at the broad end.

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[1] William of Tyre and Suger, as quoted in Giffard's History of France.

[2] William of Tyre.

Raymond of Poitou was brother to the queen's father, the saintly William of Poitou. There was, however, nothing of the saint in the disposition of Raymond, who was still young, and was the handsomest man of his time. The uncle and niece, who had never met before, were much charmed with each other. It seems strange, that the man who first awakened the jealousy of king Louis should stand in such very near relationship to his wife; yet it is certain, that as soon as queen Eleanora had recovered her beauty, somewhat sullied by the hardships she endured in the camp, she commenced such a series of coquetries with her handsome uncle, that king Louis, greatly scandalized and incensed, hurried her out of Antioch one night, and decamped to Jerusalem, with slight leave-taking of Raymond, or none at all. It is true, many authorities say that Raymond's intrigues with his niece were wholly political, and that he was persuading Eleanora to employ her power, as duchess of Aquitaine, for the extension of his dominions, and his own private advantage. It was at Antioch that Eleanora first declared "that she would not live as the wife of a man whom she had discovered was her cousin, too near by the ordinance of the church."[1] The Chronicle of Tours accuses her of receiving presents from Saladin, and this accusation was doubtless some recognition of her power as queen-regnant of the south of France. Eleanora, having taken the cross as an independent sovereign, of course was treated as such by the oriental powers.

Eleanora was enraged at her sudden removal from Antioch, which took place early in the spring of 1149: she entered the holy city in a most indignant mood. Jerusalem, the object of the ardent enthusiasm of every other crusader, raised no religious ardour in her breast; she was burning with resentment at the unaccustomed harshness king Louis exercised towards her. In Jerusalem, king Baldwin received Eleanora with the honours due both to her rank as queen of France, and her power as a sovereign-ally of the crusading league; but nothing could please her. It is not certain whether her uneasiness proceeded from a consciousness of guilt, or indignation at being the object of unfounded suspicions; but it is indisputable that, after her forced departure from Antioch, all affection between Eleanora and her husband was at an end. While the emperor of Germany and the king of France laid an unsuccessful siege to Damascus, Eleanora was detained at Jerusalem, in something like personal restraint.

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[1] Guillaume de Nangis' Chronicle, quoted by Michelet.

The great abilities of Sultan Noureddin rendered this siege unavailing, and Louis was glad to withdraw, with the wreck of his army, from Asia. There are letters[1] still extant from Suger, by which it appears that the king had written to him complaints of the criminal attachment of his queen to a young Saracen emir of great beauty, named Sal-Addin. For this misconduct the king of France expressed his intention of disgracing her, and putting her away as soon as he arrived in his dominions, but was dissuaded from this resolution by the suggestions of his sagacious minister, who pointed out to him the troubles which would accrue to France by the relinquishment of the "great Provence dower," and that his daughter, the princess Marie, would be deprived, in all probability, of her mother's rich inheritance, if the queen were at liberty to marry again. This remonstrance so far prevailed on Louis, that he permitted his discontented spouse to accompany him to Paris, November 1149. The royal pair made a solemn entry into the capital on their return from the crusade, with as much triumphant pomp as if they had gained great victories during an absence of two years and four months, instead of having passed their time in a series of defeats and disasters. Suger then resigned his regency to the king, with much more pleasure, as he said, than he took it. He had governed

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[1] In the collection of Du Chesne, which has furnished much of the information in this narrative.

France in a manner which obtained from the king and people the appellation of "father of his country."[1] The dread that Suger felt at the separation of Eleanora's southern provinces was the reason why the king continued to live with her, and allowed her to retain the dignity of queen of France.

Queen Eleanora therefore resided at Paris, with all her usual state and dignity: she was, however, closely watched, and not permitted to visit her southern dominions,—a prohibition which greatly disquieted her. She made many complaints of the gloom of the northern Gallic capital, and the monkish manners of her devout husband. She was particularly indignant at the plain and unostentatious clothing of king Louis, who had likewise displeased her by sacrificing, at the suggestion of the clergy, all his long curls, besides shaving off his beard and moustaches. The giddy queen made a constant mockery of her husband's appearance, and vowed that his smooth face made him look more like a cloistered priest than a valiant king. Thus two years passed away in mutual discontent, till, in the year 1150, Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou,[2] appeared at the court of Louis VII. Geoffrey did homage for Normandy, and presented to Louis his son, young Henry Plantagenet, surnamed Fitz-Empress. This youth was about seventeen, and was then first seen by queen Eleanora. But the scandalous chroniclers of the day declare the queen was much taken by the fine person and literary attainments of Geoffrey, who was considered the most accomplished knight of this time. Geoffrey was a married man; but queen Eleanora as little regarded the marriage engagements of the persons on whom she bestowed her attention, as she did her own conjugal ties.

About eighteen months after the departure of the Angevin princes, the queen of France gave birth to another princess, named Alice. Soon after this event, Henry Plantagenet once more visited Paris, to do homage for Normandy and Anjou, a pleuritic fever having suddenly carried off his father. Queen Eleanora now transferred her former partiality for the father to the son, who had become a noble, martial-looking prince, full of energy, learned, valiant, and enterprising, and ready to undertake any conquest, whether of the heart of the gay queen of the South, or of the kingdom from which he had been unjustly disinherited. Eleanora acted with her usual disgusting levity in the advances she made to this youth. Her beauty was still unimpaired, though her character was in low esteem with the world. Motives of interest induced Henry to feign a return to the passion of queen Eleanora: his mother's cause was hopeless in England, and Eleanora assured him that, if she could effect a divorce from Louis, her ships and treasures should be at his command for the subjugation of king Stephen.

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[1] Vie de Suger.

[2] Vie de Gaufred, Duc de Normand.

The intimacy between Henry and Eleanora soon awakened the displeasure of the king of France, consequently the prince departed for Anjou. Queen Eleanora immediately made an application for a divorce, under the plea that king Louis was her fourth cousin. It does not appear that he opposed this separation, though it certainly originated from the queen. Notwithstanding the advice of Suger, Louis seems to have accorded heartily with the proposition, and the divorce was finally pronounced by a council of the church at Baugenci,[1] March 18, 1152; where the marriage was not dissolved on account of the queen's adultery, as is commonly asserted, but declared invalid because of consanguinity. Eleanora and Louis, with most of their relations, met at Baugenci, and were present when the divorce was pronounced.[2] Suger, who had so long opposed the separation of Eleanora from his king, died a few days before that event took place.[3]

It is useless for modern historians either to blame or praise Louis VII. for his scrupulous honesty in restoring to Eleanora her patrimonial dominions; he restored nothing that he was able to keep, excepting her person. When the divorce was first agitated, Louis VII. tried the experiment of seizing several of the strongholds in Guienne, but found the power of the South was too strong for him. Giffard, who never wrote a line without the guide of contemporary chronicles, has made it fully apparent that the queen of the South was a stronger potentate than the king of the North. If the lady of '*Oc*' and '*No*,' and the lord of '*Oui*' and '*Non*,' had tried for the mastery by force of arms, the civilized, the warlike, and maritime Provençals would certainly have raised the banner of St. George and the golden leopards far above the oriflamme of France, and rejoiced at having such fair cause of quarrel with their *suzerain* as the rescue of their princess. Moreover, Louis could not detain Eleanora, without defying the decree of the pope.

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[1] Sir Harris Nicolas' Chronology of History.

[2] Bouquet des Histoires.

[3] Vie de Suger.

On her way southward to her own country,[1] Eleanora remained some time at Blois. The count of this province was Thibaut, elder brother to king Stephen, one of the handsomest and bravest men of his time. Much captivated with the splendour of "the great Provence dower," Thibaut offered his hand to his fair guest. He met with a refusal, which by no means turned him from his purpose, as he resolved to detain the lady, a prisoner in his fortress, till she complied with his proposal. Eleanora suspected his design, and departed by night, without the ceremony of leave-taking. She embarked on the Loire, and went down the stream to Tours, which was then belonging to the dominions of Anjou.

Here her good luck, or dexterous management, brought her off clear from another mal-adventure. Young Geoffrey Plantagenet, the next brother to the man she intended to marry, had likewise a great inclination to be sovereign of the South. He placed himself in ambush at a part of the Loire called 'the Port of Piles,' with the intention of seizing the duchess and her train, and carrying her off, and marrying her. "But," says the chronicler, "Eleanora was pre-warned by her good angel, and she suddenly turned down a branch of the stream southwards, towards her own country." Thither Henry Plantagenet, the elder brother of Geoffrey, repaired, to claim the hand which had been promised him months before the divorce. The celerity with which the marriage of Eleanora followed her divorce astonished all Europe, for she gave her hand to Henry Plantagenet, duke of Normandy and count of Anjou, only six weeks after the divorce was pronounced.

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[1] Script. Rer. Franc.

Eleanora is supposed to have been in her thirty-second year, and the bridegroom in his twentieth,—a disparity somewhat ominous, in regard to their future matrimonial felicity.

The duchess of Aquitaine and the duke of Normandy were married at Bourdeaux[1] on May-day, with all the pomp that the luxurious taste of Eleanora, aided by Provençal wealth, could effect. If Henry and Eleanora could have been married a few months earlier, it would have been better for the reputation of the bride, since all chroniclers are very positive in fixing the birth of her eldest son, William,[2] on the 17th of August, 1152, little more than four months after their union on the first of May. The birth of this boy accounts for the haste with which Eleanora was divorced. Had king Louis detained his unfaithful wife, a dispute might have arisen respecting the succession to the crown of France. This child was born in Normandy, whither Henry conveyed Eleanora directly after their marriage, leaving the garrisons of Aquitaine commanded by Norman officers faithful to his interest; a step which was the commencement of his unpopularity in his wife's dominions.

Louis VII. was much displeased at the marriage of his divorced queen with Henry of Anjou. He viewed with uneasiness the union of the fair provinces of the South with Anjou and Normandy; and, in order to invalidate it, he actually forbade Henry to marry without his permission, claiming that authority as his feudal lord. His measures, we think, ought to acquit king Louis of the charge of too much righteousness in his political dealings, for which he is blamed by the superficial Voltaire. However, the hostility of Louis, who entered into a league with king Stephen, roused young Henry from the pleasures in which he was spending the first year of his nuptials; and breaking from his wedded Circe, he obtained, from her fondness, a fleet for the enforcement of his claims to his rightful inheritance. Eleanora was sovereign of a wealthy maritime country, whose ships were equally used for war and commerce. Leaving his wife and son in Normandy, Henry embarked from Harfleur with thirty-six ships, May 1153. Without the aid of this Provençal fleet, England would never have reckoned the name of Plantagenet among her royal dynasties.

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[1] Gervase. Brompton.

[2] Toone's Chronological History gives this date: it is supported by Sandford and Speed from chronicles, and the assertion of Robert of Gloucester in the following words,—"Henry was acquaint with the queen of France *some deal too much, as me weened.*"

These circumstances are alluded to, with some dry humour, in the following lines by Robert of Gloucester:—

> "In eleven hundred years of grace and forty-one,
> Died Geoffry of Plantagenet, the earl of Anjou.
> Henry his son and heir, earl was made thorough
> All Anjou, and duke of Normand:—much it was his mind
> To come and win England, for he was next of kind, [kin]
> And to help his moder, who was oft in feeble chance.
> But he was much acquaint with the queen of France,
> *Some deal too much, as me weened;* so that in some thing
> The queen loved him, as me trowed, more than her lord the king;
> So that it was forth put that the king and she
> So sibbe were, that they must no longer together be.
> The kindred was proved so near, that king Louis there
> And Eleanor his queen by the pope departed were.
> Some were glad enow, as might be truly seen,
> For Henry the empress' son forthwith espoused the queen.
> The queen riches enow had under her hand,
> Which helped Henry then to war on England.
> In the eleventh hundred year and fifty-two
> After God on earth came, this spousing was ado;
> The next year after that, Henry his power nom, [took]
> And with six-and-thirty ships to England com."

There is reason to believe that at this period Henry seduced the heart and won the affections of the beautiful Rosamond Clifford, under the promise of marriage, as the birth of her eldest son corresponds with Henry's visit to England at this time; for he left England the year before Stephen's death, 1153.[1] Henry was busy laying siege to the castle of one of his rebels in Normandy when the news of Stephen's death reached him. Six weeks elapsed before he sailed to take possession of his kingdom. His queen and infant son accompanied him. They waited a month at Barfleur for a favourable wind,[2] and after all they had a dangerous passage, but landed safely at Osterham, December 8. The king and queen waited at the port for some days, while the fleet, dispersed by the wind, collected. They then went to Winchester,[1] where they received the homage of the southern barons. Theobald archbishop of Canterbury, and some of the chief nobles, came to hasten their appearance in London, "where Henry was," say the Saxon chroniclers, "received with great honour and worship, and blessed to king the Sunday before Midwinter-day." Eleanora and Henry were crowned in Westminster-abbey, December 19, 1154, "after England," to use the words of Henry of Huntingdon, "had been without a king for six weeks." Henry's security, during this interval, was owing to the powerful fleet of his queen, which commanded the seas between Normandy and England, and kept all rebels in awe.

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[1] His proceedings in England have been detailed in the preceding biography

[2] Brompton.

The coronation of the king of England and the luxurious lady of the South was without parallel for magnificence. Here were seen in profusion mantles of silk and brocade, of a new fashion and splendid texture, brought by queen Eleanora[2] from Constantinople. In the illuminated portraits of this queen she wears a wimple, or close coif, with a circlet of gems put over it; her kirtle, or close gown, has tight sleeves, and fastens with full gathers just below the throat, confined with a rich collar of gems. Over this is worn the elegant pelisson, or outer robe, bordered with fur, with very full loose sleeves lined with ermine, showing gracefully the tight kirtle sleeves beneath. In some portraits the queen is seen with her hair braided, and closely wound round the head with jewelled bands. Over all was thrown a square of fine lawn or gauze, which supplied the place of a veil, and was worn precisely like the *faziola*, still the national costume of the lower orders of Venice. Sometimes this coverchief, or kerchief, was drawn over the features down below the chin; it thus supplied the place of veil and bonnet, when abroad; sometimes it descended but to the brow, just as the wearer was disposed to show or conceal her face. Frequently the coverchief was confined, by the bandeau, or circlet, being placed on the head, over it. Girls before marriage wore their hair in ringlets or tresses on their shoulders. The church was very earnest in preaching against the public display of ladies' hair after marriage. The long hair of the men likewise drew down the constant fulminations of the church; but after Henry I. had cut off his curls, and forbidden long hair at court, his courtiers adopted periwigs; indeed, if we may judge by the queer effigy on his coins, the handsome Stephen himself wore a wig. Be this as it may, the thunder of the pulpit was instantly levelled at wigs, which were forbidden by a sumptuary law of king Henry.

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[1] Sir Harris Nicolas' Chronology of History.

[2] It is said she introduced the growth of silk in her southern dominions, a benefit attributed to Henry the Great.

Henry II. made his appearance, at his coronation, with short hair, moustaches, and shaven chin; he wore a doublet, and short Angevin cloak, which immediately gained for him from his subjects, Norman and English, the *sobriquet* of 'Court-mantle.' His dalmatica was of the richest brocade, bordered with gold embroidery. At this coronation, ecclesiastics were first seen in England dressed in sumptuous robes of silk and velvet, worked with gold. This was in imitation of the luxury of the Greek church: the splendour of the dresses seen by the queen at Constantinople, occasioned the introduction of this corruption in the western church. Such was the costume of the court of Eleanora of Aquitaine, the queen of England, in the year of her coronation, 1154. The Christmas festivities were celebrated that year with great pomp, at Westminster-palace; but directly the coronation was over, the king conducted his queen to the palace of Bermondsey, where, after remaining some weeks in retirement, she gave birth to her second son, the last day of February, 1155.

Bermondsey, the first place of Eleanora's residence in England, was, as delineated in its ancient plans, a pastoral village nearly opposite to London, of a character decidedly Flemish. Rich in well-cultivated gardens and wealthy velvet meads, it possessed, likewise, an ancient Saxon palace,[1] and a priory then newly built. Assuredly the metropolis must have presented itself to the view of its foreign queen, from the palace of Bermondsey, with much more picturesque grandeur than it does at present, when its unwieldy size and smoky atmosphere prevent an entire *coup d'œil*. But at one glance from the opposite bank of the river the eyes of the fair Provençal could then behold London, her royal city, situated on ground rising from the Thames. It was at that time girdled with an embattled wall, which was studded with gateways, both by water and land.[1] The new Tower of London kept guard on the eastern extremity of the city, and the lofty spire of the ancient cathedral presided over the western side, just behind the antique gateway of Ludgate. This gate led to the pleasant road of the river's Strand, ornamented with the old Temple, its fair gardens and wharf, and interspersed with a few *inns*,[2] or metropolitan dwellings of the nobility, the cultivated grounds of which sloped down to their water-stairs and boat-houses, the Thames being then the highway of London. The Strand road terminated in the majestic palace and abbey of Westminster, the old palace, with its yard and gardens, once belonging to St. Edward, and the new palace, its noble hall and water-stairs, which owed their origin to the Norman dynasty. Such was the metropolis when Henry II. succeeded to the English crown.

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[1] Annals of the Abbey of Bermondsey.

If the example and conduct of the first Provençal queen was neither edifying nor pleasing to her subjects, yet, in a commercial point of view, the connexion of the merchants of England with her Aquitanian dominions was highly advantageous. The wine trade with Bourdeaux became considerable.[3] In a few months after the accession of Eleanora as queen-consort of England, large fortunes were made by the London traders, who imported the wines of Gascony from the port of Bourdeaux;[4] and above all, (by the example of the maritime cities of Guienne,) the shipping of England was governed by the ancient code of laws, called the code of Oleron. In compliment to his consort Eleanora, Henry II. adopted for his plate-mark the cross of Aquitaine, with the addition of his initial letter ℌ. An instance of this curious fact is still to be seen in the grace-cup of Thomas à-Becket.[1]

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[1] Dowgate and Billingsgate.

[2] Inn was not, in early times, a word used for a house of public entertainment. Its original signification was a temporary abode in London, used by abbot, bishop, or peer.

[3] Anderson's History of Commerce.

[4] "The land," says one of the malcontent Saxon chroniclers, "became full of drink and drunkards. Claret was 4*d*. per gallon at this time. Gascon wine in general sold at 20*s*. per tun.

The English chose to regard Henry II. solely as the descendant of their ancient Saxon line. "Thou art son,"[2] said they, "to the most glorious empress Matilda, whose mother was Matilda Atheling, daughter to Margaret, saint and queen, whose father was Edward, son to king Edmund Ironside, who was great-grandson to king Alfred." Such were the expressions of the English, when Henry convened a great meeting of the nobility and chief people at Wallingford, in March 1155; where, by the advice of his mother, the empress Matilda, (who had learned wisdom from adversity,) he swore to confirm to the English the laws of Alfred and Edward the Confessor, as set forth in the great charter of Henry I. At this grand convocation queen Eleanora appeared with her eldest son, then in his fourth year, and the infant Henry. The baronage of England kissed the hands of the infants, and vowed to recognise them as the heirs of the English monarchy. A few weeks after this recognition the queen lost her eldest son, who was buried at Reading, at the feet of his great-grandfather, Henry I.

The principal residences of the court were Winchester-palace, Westminster-palace, and the country palace of Woodstock. The amusements most favoured by queen Eleanora were of a dramatic kind. Besides the Mysteries and Miracles played by the parish-clerks and students of divinity, the classic taste of the accomplished Eleanora patronised representations nearly allied to the regular drama, since we find that Peter of Blois,[3] in his epistles, congratulates his brother William on his tragedy of Flaura and Marcus, played before the queen. This William was an abbot, but was master of the revels or amusements at court: he composed all the Mysteries and Miracles performed before the queen at Westminster and Winchester.

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[1] This cup formerly belonged to the Arundel Collection, and was given by Bernard Edward, the late duke of Norfolk, to H. Howard, esq., of Corby-castle, who thus became the possessor of this highly-prized relic of Eleanora's era. The cross of Aquitaine somewhat resembles the Maltese cross; the cup is of ivory mounted with silver, which is studded on the summit and base with pearls and precious stones. The inscription round the cup is, VINUM TUUM BIBE CUM GAUDIO,—'Drink thy wine with joy;' but round the lid, deeply engraved, is the restraining injunction, SOBRII ESTOTE, with the initials T. B. interlaced with a mitre, the peculiarly low form of which stamps the antiquity of the whole.

[2] Ailred Chronicle.

[3] Or Petrus Blesensis, who was born, 1120, at the city of Blois, of a noble family. He was preceptor to William II. of Sicily, 1157, was invited to England by

It is to Peter of Blois we owe a graphic description of king Henry's person and manners; likewise the picture of his court setting out in progress. "When king Henry sets out of a morning, you see multitudes of people running up and down as if they were distracted; horses rushing against horses, carriages overturning carriages, players, gamesters, cooks, confectioners, morris-dancers, barbers, courtesans, and parasites, making so much noise, and, in a word, such an intolerable tumultuous jumble of horse and foot, that you imagine the great abyss hath opened, and that hell hath poured forth all its inhabitants." We think this disorderly crew must have belonged to the queen's court, for the sketch given us by the same most amusing author of king Henry himself, would lead us to suppose that he countenanced no such riotous doings. The chaplain Peter[1] thus minutely describes king Henry, the husband of Eleanora of Aquitaine, in his letter to the archbishop of Panormitan:—"In praising David the king, it is read that he was ruddy, but you must understand that my lord the king is sub-rufus, or pale-red; his harness [armour] hath somewhat changed his colour. Of middle stature he is so that among little men seemeth he not much, nor among long men seemeth he over little. His head is round, as in token of great wit, and of special high counsel the treasury."

Our readers would scarcely expect phrenological observations in an epistle of the twelfth century, but we faithfully write what we find therein:—"His head is of such quantity, that to the neck, and to all the body, it accordeth by even proportion.

Henry II., and made his chaplain, and archdeacon of Bath; likewise private secretary to the king. He spent some years at the court of England, and died about the end of the twelfth century. He wrote about one hundred and thirty letters, in the most lively and individualizing style. These he collected and perpetuated, by making many copies, at the express desire of his royal master, Henry II.

[1] As edited by Hearne.

His een pykeled [fine], and clear as to colour while he is of pleased will; but through disturbance of heart, like sparkling fire or lightning with hastiness. His head of curly hair, when clipped square in the forehead, sheweth a lyonous visage, the nostrils even and comely, according to all the other features. High vaulted feet, legs able to riding, broad bust, and long champion arms, which telleth him to be strong, light, and hardy. In a toe of his foot the nail groweth into the flesh, and in harm to the foot over waxeth. His hands, through their large size, sheweth negligence, for he utterly leaveth the keeping of them; never, but when he beareth hawks, weareth he gloves. Each day at mass and council, and other open needs of the realm, throughout the whole morning he standeth a foot, and yet when he eateth he never sitteth down. In one day he will, if need be, ride two or three journeys, and thus hath he oft circumvented the plots of his enemies. A huge lover of woods is he, so that when he ceaseth of war he haunteth places of hawking and hunting. He useth boots without folding caps, and homely and short clothes weareth he. His flesh would have charged him with fatness, but with travel and fasting he adaunteth [keeps it down], and in riding and going travaileth he mightily his youth. Not as other kings lieth he in his palace, but travelling about by his provinces espieth he the doings of all men. He doometh those that he judges when they do wrong, and punisheth them by stronger judgment than other men. No man more wise in counsel, ne more dreadful in prosperity, ne steadfaster in adversity. When once he loveth, scarcely will he ever hate; when once he hateth, scarcely ever receiveth he into grace. Oft holdeth he in hand swords, bows, and hunting-gear, excepting he be at council or at book. When he may rest from worldly business, privily he occupieth himself about learning and reading, and among his clerks asketh he questions. For though your king[1] be well y-lettered [learned], our king by far is more y-lettered. I, forsooth, in science of letters, know the cunning of them both, ye wotting well that my lord the king of Sicily a whole year was my disciple, and though by you he had the beginning of teaching, yet by me he had the benefit of more full science.[1] And as soon as I went out of Sicily, *your* king cast away his books, and gave himself up to palatine[2] idleness. But, forsooth, *our* lord the king of England has each day a school for right well lettered men; hence his conversation, that he hath with them, is busy discussing of questions. None is more honest than our king in speaking; ne in alms largess. Therefore, as Holy Writ saith, we may say of him, 'His name is a precious ointment, and the alms of him all the church shall take.'" Such is the picture of the first of our great Plantagenet monarchs, drawn in minute pencilling by the man who had known him from his childhood.

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[1] The king of Sicily, William the Good, afterwards Henry II.'s son-in-law.

It is not a very easy task to reduce to any thing like perspicuity the various traditions which float through the chronicles regarding queen Eleanora's unfortunate rival, the celebrated Rosamond Clifford. No one who studies history ought to despise tradition, for we shall find that tradition is generally founded on fact, even when defective, or regardless of chronology. The learned and accurate Carte has not thought it beneath him to examine carefully the testimony that exists regarding Rosamond; and we find, from him, that we must confine her connexion with Henry to the two years succeeding his marriage. He has proved that the birth of her youngest son, and her profession as a nun at Godstow, took place within that space of time, and he has proved it from the irrefragable witness of existing charters, of endowments of lands given by the Clifford family to benefit the convent of Godstow, of provision made by Henry II. for her son William Long-éspée and his brother, and of benefactions he bestowed on the nunnery of Godstow because Rosamond had become a votaress therein. It appears that the acquaintance between Rosamond and Henry commenced in early youth, about the time of his knighthood by his uncle the king of Scotland; that it was renewed at the time of his successful invasion of England, when he entered privately into marriage contract[1] with the unsuspecting girl; and before he left England, to return to his wife, his noble boy William, surnamed Long-éspée, was born. His own words afterwards confirmed this report: "Thou art my legitimate son," said he to one of the sons of Rosamond, who met him at the head of an armed force at a time when the rebellion of the princes had distressed him; "and," continued he, "the rest are bastards."[2] Perhaps these words afford the truest explanation of the mysterious dissensions which perpetually distracted the royal family.

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[1] By this passage it appears that Peter Blois had been the tutor to Henry II. and the king of Sicily.

[2] The idleness and luxuries of the palace.

How king Henry excused his perjury, both to Rosamond and the queen, is not explained by chronicle; he seems to have endeavoured, by futile expedients, to keep them both in ignorance of his perfidy. As Rosamond was retained by him as a prisoner, though not an unwilling one, it was easy to conceal from her the facts, that he had wedded a queen and brought her to England; but his chief difficulty was to conceal Rosamond's existence from Eleanora, and yet to indulge himself with frequent visits to the real object of his love.

Brompton says, "That one day queen Eleanora saw the king walking in the pleasance of Woodstock, with the end of a ball of floss silk attached to his spur; coming near him unperceived, she took up the ball, and the king walking on, the silk unwound, and thus the queen traced him to a thicket in the labyrinth or maze of the park, where he disappeared. She kept the matter secret, often revolving in her own mind in what company he could meet with balls of silk. Soon after, the king left Woodstock for a distant journey; then queen Eleanora, bearing her discovery in mind, searched the thicket in the park, and discovered a low door cunningly concealed; this door she had forced, and found it was the entrance to a winding subterranean path, which led out at a distance to a sylvan lodge in the most retired part of the adjacent forest." Here the queen found, in a bower, a young lady of incomparable beauty, busily engaged in embroidery. Queen Eleanora then easily guessed how balls of silk attached themselves to king Henry's spurs. Whatever was the result of the interview between Eleanora and Rosamond, it is certain that the queen did not destroy her rival either by sword or poison, though in her rage it is possible that she might threaten both. That Rosamond was not killed may be ascertained by the charters before named, which plainly show that she lived twenty years, in great penitence, after her retirement from the king. It is extremely probable that her interview with Eleanora led to her first knowledge that Henry was a married man, and consequently to her profession at Godstow, which took place the second year of Henry's reign. The grand error in the statements regarding Rosamond is, the assertion that she was a young girl seduced and concealed by the king when he was in advanced life. Now the charters collated by Carte prove that the acquaintance of Rosamond and Henry commenced in early youth, that they were nearly of the same age, and that their connexion terminated soon after queen Eleanora came to England.

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[1] Carte. Brompton. Boswell's Antiquities.

[2] Lingard.

Twenty years afterwards, when Rosamond's death really occurred in her convent, it happened to coincide with Eleanora's imprisonment and disgrace. This coincidence revived the memory of the romantic incidents connected with Henry's love for Rosamond Clifford. The high rank of the real object of the queen's jealousy at that time, and the circumstances of horror regarding Henry's profligacy, as the seducer of the princess Alice, his son's wife, occasioned a mystery at court which no one dared to define. The common people, in their endeavours to guess this state secret, combined the death of the poor penitent at Godstow with Eleanora's imprisonment, and thus the report was raised that Eleanora had killed Rosamond. To these causes we trace the disarrangement of the chronology in the story of Rosamond, which has cast doubts on the truth of her adventures. In Brompton's narrative, we find the labyrinth[1] at Woodstock, and the clue of silk, famous in the romance and ballad. His chronology of the incidents is decidedly wrong, but the actual events are confirmed by the most ancient authorities.

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[1] As to the labyrinth or maze at Woodstock, it most likely existed before the time of Rosamond, and remained after her death, since all pleasances or gardens in the middle age were contrived with this adjunct. Traces of them exist to this day, in the names of places near defunct royal palaces; witness 'Maze-hill' at Greenwich, (near the site of the maze or labyrinth of Greenwich-palace,) and 'the Maze' in Southwark, once part of the garden of the princess Mary Tudor's palace. We have evidence that Edward III. (between whom and the death of Rosamond little more than a century intervened) familiarly called a structure

Queen Eleanora brought her husband a princess in the year 1156; this was the eldest daughter, the princess Matilda. The next year the queen spent in England. Her celebrated son, Richard Cœur de Lion, was born September 1157, at a palace considered one of the finest in the kingdom, called the Beau-Monte, in Oxford. Thus, that renowned university claims the honour of being the birth-place of this great warrior. This palace was afterwards turned into the White Friars' church, and then to a workhouse. The chamber in which Richard was born still remains, a roofless ruin, with some vestiges of a fire-place;[1] but such as it is, this fragment is deeply interesting to the English, as the birth-place of a hero of whom they are proud.

Eleanora of Aquitaine, in some passages of her life, appears as one of the most prominent characters of her age: she was very actively employed, either as sovereign of her own dominions or regent of Normandy, during the period from 1157 to 1172. Eleanora was crowned a second time at Worcester, with the king, in 1159. When the royal pair came to the oblation, they both took off their crowns, and, laying them on the altar, vowed never to wear them more.

A son was born to Henry and Eleanora, September 23rd, after the Worcester coronation: this prince bore the name of the king's father, Geoffrey Plantagenet. The same year the king betrothed this boy to Constance, the heiress of Conan, duke of Bretagne. The infant Constance was about eighteen

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pertaining to Woodstock-palace, 'Rosamond's chamber,' the locality of which he minutely describes in a letter preserved in the Fœdera, vol. iv. p. 629. In this document he directs William de Montacute "to order various repairs at his manor of Woodstock; and that the house *beyond the gate in the new wall* be built again, and that same chamber, called Rosamond's chamber, to be restored as before, and crystal plates, and marble, and lead to be provided for it." Here is indisputable proof that there was a structure called Rosamond's chamber, distinct from Woodstock-palace yet belonging to its domain, being a building situated beyond the park wall. Edward III. passed the first years of his marriage principally at Woodstock, therefore he well knew the localities of the place; which will agree with the old chroniclers, if we suppose Rosamond's residence was approached by a tunnel under the park wall.

[1] Boswell's Antiquities.

months older than the little prince Geoffrey. Henry had made most unjust seizure of Bretagne, by way of conquest; he, however, soothed the independent Bretons, by marrying their infant duchess to his son. His ambitious thirst for extension of empire, was not sated by the acquisition of this dukedom; he immediately laid siege to Thoulouse, and, in the name of queen Eleanora, claimed that sovereignty of earl Raymond, who was in possession, and the ally of the king of France. A year was occupied with skirmishing and negotiation, during which time Eleanora acted as queen-regent in England.

Henry sent for his queen to Normandy in 1160; she went in great state, taking with her prince Henry and her eldest daughter, to meet their father. The occasion of her presence being required was, the marriage of Marguerite, the daughter of her former husband Louis VII. by his second wife, with her young son Henry. Chancellor Becket went with a magnificent retinue to Paris, and brought the little bride, aged three years, to the queen at Rouen. Both bride and bridegroom were given, after their marriage, to Becket[1] for education; and this extraordinary person inspired in their young bosoms an attachment to him that ended but with their lives. Queen Eleanora kept her Christmas at Mans, with the king, in great state and splendour, the year of this betrothment.

After a sharp dispute, between Henry II. and Louis VII., relative to the portion of the princess Marguerite, the king of France compromised the matter by giving the city of Gisors as a portion with another infant princess of France, named Alice, in 1162.[2] This child was in her third year when wedded to prince Richard, who was then seven years old. The little princess was unfortunately consigned to the king of England for education. Two marriages were thus contracted between the daughters of Louis VII. and the sons of his divorced queen,—connexions which must seem most extraordinary, when we consider that the father of the brides and the mother of the bridegrooms had been married, and were the parents of children who were sisters to both. Louis VII. gave his eldest daughter by queen Eleanora in marriage to Henry the Large, count of Champagne. It was in this year that king Henry's troubles began with Thomas à-Becket, who had hitherto been his favourite, his friend, and prime-minister.

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[1] The secular education and support of the little princess was consigned to Robert de Newburgh, one of Henry II.'s barons, who engaged to guard her person, and bring up the princess Marguerite in a manner befitting her royal birth.

[2] Louis had two daughters of that name,—one by Eleanora, and this child by his second queen, Alice of Champagne.

The contest between the king and Becket, which fills so many folio pages of modern history, must be briefly glanced at here. It was the same quarrel which had agitated England between Henry I. and Anselm; but England no longer possessed a virtuous daughter of her royal race for a queen, who, out of pity for the poor, deprived of their usual provision, mediated between these haughty spirits. The gay, luxurious daughter of the South was occupied with her own pleasures, and heeded not the miseries which the king's sequestrations of benefices brought on the destitute part of the population. Becket appealed to the empress Matilda, the king's mother, who haughtily repulsed his suit. Becket was the son of a London citizen, who had followed Edgar Atheling on his crusading expedition, and was made prisoner in Syria; he obtained his liberty through the affection of a Syrian lady, an emir's daughter, who followed her lover after his departure, and succeeded in finding him in London, although she knew but two European words, 'London' and 'Gilbert,'—the place of abode and Christian name of her lover. The pagan maiden was baptized, by the favourite Norman name of Matilda, and from this romantic union sprang Thomas à-Becket, who was remarkable for his learning and brilliant talents, and his fine stature and beauty. The love which Gilbert Becket bore to the race and blood of Alfred, which had sent him crusading with prince Edgar, rendered him the firm partisan of his niece, the empress Matilda.

Young Becket had taken the only road to distinction open to an Anglo-Saxon: yet he was *of* the church, but not in it; for he was neither priest nor monk, being rather a church-lawyer than a clergyman. Henry II. had distinguished this Anglo-Saxon with peculiar favour, to the indignation of his wife and mother, who warned him against feeling friendship for an Anglo-Saxon serf with the loathing that the daughters of rajahs might feel for a pariah. The see of Canterbury having remained vacant a year and a half, Henry urged his favourite to accept it, in hopes that he would connive at his plans of diverting the revenues of the church to enrich those of the crown, for this was simply the whole cause of the perpetual contest between the Anglo-Norman kings and the archbishops of Canterbury since the Conquest; but as the church supported the destitute poor, it is not difficult to decide which had the moral right. Archdeacon Becket protested that if he were once a bishop, he must uphold the rights of the church; but the king still insisted on investing him with the archbishopric. The night before his consecration, at supper, he told the king that this archbishopric would place an eternal barrier between their friendship. Henry would not believe it. Becket was consecrated priest one day, and was invested as archbishop of Canterbury the next. To the annoyance of the king he instantly resigned his chancellorship, and became a firm champion for the rights of his see. For seven years the contest between Becket and Henry continued, during which time we have several events to note, and to conclude the history of the empress Matilda. She was left[1] regent of Normandy by her son, which country she governed with great wisdom and kept in a peaceful state, but she never returned to England.

In the year 1165 king Louis VII. gave the princess Alice (his youngest daughter by queen Eleanora) in marriage to the count of Blois, and at the same time endowed him with the office of high-seneschal of France, which was the feudal right of Henry II., as count of Anjou. Henry violently resented this disposal of his office; and the empress his mother, who foresaw the rising storm, and who had been thoroughly satiated with the horrors of war in her youth, wrote to pope Alexander, begging him to meet her, to mediate between the angry kings. The pope obeyed the summons of the royal matron, and the kings met Matilda and the pontiff at Gisors. The differences between Becket and Henry II. had then risen to a fearful height. It appears that Matilda was charged by the pope with a commission of peace-making between Becket and his royal master. Emboldened by the mandate of the pope, Becket once more referred to the empress Matilda as the mediator between the church and her son, and no more met with repulse. We have seen the disgust with which Matilda recoiled from any communication with Becket, as the son of a Saxon villein; nevertheless, this great man, by means of his eloquent epistles, was beginning to exercise the same dominion over the mind of the haughty empress that he did over every living creature with whom he communicated. Henry II., alarmed at his progress, sent to his mother a priest named John of Oxford, who was charged to inform her of many particulars derogatory to Becket's moral character,—events, probably, that happened during his gay and magnificent career as chancellor and archdeacon.

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[1] Hoveden. Gervase. Newberry.

The demise of the duke of Bretagne had called Henry II. to take possession of that duchy, in the name of the infant duchess Constance and her betrothed lord, his son Geoffrey, when the news arrived of the death of the empress Matilda, which occurred September 10, 1167. The mother of Henry II. was deeply regretted in Normandy, where she was called "the lady of the English." She governed Normandy with discretion and moderation, applying her revenues wholly to the benefit of the common weal and many public works.[1] While regent of Normandy, she applied her private revenues to building the magnificent stone bridge, of thirteen arches, over the Seine, called le Grand Pont. The construction of this bridge was one of the wonders of the age, being built with curved piers, to humour the rapid current of the river. The empress built and endowed three monasteries; among these was the magnificent structure of St. Ouen. She resided chiefly at the palace of Rouen, with occasional visits to the abbey of Bec.

Matilda died the 10th of September, 1167. She was interred with royal honours, first, in the convent of Bonnes Nouvelles: her body was afterwards transferred to the abbey of Bec, before the altar of the Virgin. Her son left his critical affairs in Bretagne, to attend her funeral. He raised a stately marble tomb to her memory; upon it was the following epitaph, whose climax tends rather to advance the glory of the surviving son than the defunct mother :—

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[1] Ducarel's Normandy.

"Great born, great married, greater brought to bed,
Here Henry's daughter, wife, and mother's laid."[1]

In this grave her body remained till the year 1282, when the abbey church of Bec being rebuilt, the workmen discovered it, wrapped up in an ox-hide. The coffin was taken up, and, with great solemnity, re-interred in the middle of the chancel, before the high altar. The ancient tomb was removed to the same place, and, with the attention the church of Rome ever showed to the memory of a foundress, erected over the new grave. This structure falling to decay in the seventeenth century, its place was supplied by a fine monument of brass, with a pompous inscription.[2] The character of this celebrated ancestress of our royal line was as much revered by the Normans as disliked by the English. Besides Henry II. she was the mother of two sons, Geoffrey and William, who both preceded her to the grave.

Queen Eleanora was resident, during these events, at the palace of Woodstock, where prince John was born, in the year 1166. Henry completed the noble hall of the palace of Rouen,[3] begun by Henry I. and nearly finished by the empress Matilda. He sent for queen Eleanora from England, to bring her daughter the princess Matilda, that she might be married to her affianced lord, Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony. The nuptial feast was celebrated in the newly-finished hall of Rouen-palace, first opened for this stately banquet, 1167. Queen Eleanora was left regent of Normandy by her royal lord; but the people, discontented at the loss of the empress

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[1] "Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima partu,
Hic jacet Henrici filia, sponsa, parens."

[2] Her remains were discovered and exhumed, for the fourth time, January 1847, when the ruins of the Benedictine church of Bec (Hellouin) were demolished. According to the Moniteur, a leaden coffin, containing fragments of bones and silver lace, was found, with an inscription affirming that the chest contained the illustrious bones of the empress Matilda, &c.

[3] Thierry.

Matilda, rebelled against her authority; which insurrection obliged Henry to come to the aid of his wife.

Guienne and Poitou became in a state of revolt soon after.[1] The people, who earnestly desired Eleanora, their native princess, to govern them, would not be pacified till Henry brought his queen, and left her at Bourdeaux with her son Richard. Henry, the heir of England, was entitled the duke of Guienne; but for Eleanora's favourite son, Richard, was intended the county of Poitou, subject to vassalage to his brother and father. This arrangement quieted the discontents of Aquitaine. The princess Marguerite, the young wife of prince Henry, was left in Guienne with her mother-in-law, while Henry II. and his heir proceeded to England, then convulsed with the disputes between church and state carried on by Becket. Queen Eleanora and prince Richard remained at Bourdeaux, to the satisfaction of the people of the south, who were delighted with the presence of their reigning family, although the Norman deputies of king Henry still continued to exercise all the real power of the government.

The heart of Henry's son and heir still yearned to his old tutor, Becket,—an affection which the king beheld with jealousy. In order to wean his son from this attachment, in which the young princess Marguerite fully shared, Henry II. resolved, in imitation of the Capetian royal family, to have his son crowned king in his lifetime, and to associate him in the government. "Be glad, my son,"[2] said Henry II. to him, when he set the first dish on the table at the coronation-banquet in Westminster-hall; "there is no prince in Europe has such a sewer[3] at his table!"—"No great condescension for the son of an earl to wait on the son of a king," replied young Henry, aside to the earl of Leicester. The princess Marguerite was not crowned at the same time with her husband;[4] she remained in Aquitaine, with her mother-in-law, queen Eleanora. Her father, the king of France, was enraged at this slight offered to his daughter, and flew to arms to avenge the affront. Yet it was no fault of king Henry, who had made every preparation for the coronation of the princess, even to ordering her royal robes to be in readiness; but when Marguerite found that Becket, the guardian of her youth, was not to crown her, she perversely refused to share the coronation of her husband.

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[1] Tyrrell.

[2] Hoveden.

[3] This being one of the functions of the grand seneschal of France, which Henry had to perform, as his feudal service at the coronation of a king of France, as count of Anjou, led to his performing the same office at his son's banquet.

[4] Peter of Blois.

The character of Henry II., during the long strife that subsisted between him and his former friend, had changed from the calm heroism portrayed by Peter of Blois; he had given way to fits of violence, agonizing to himself and dangerous to his health. It was said, that when any tidings came of the contradiction of his will by Becket, he would tear his hair, and roll on the ground with rage, grasping handsful of rushes in the paroxysms of his passion.[1] It was soon after one of these frenzies of rage that, in 1170, he fell ill[2] at Dromfront, in Maine: he then made his will, believing his end approaching. To his son Henry he left England, Normandy, Maine, and Anjou; to Richard he left the Aquitanian dominions; Geoffrey had Bretagne, in right of his wife; while John was left dependent on his brothers. From this order of affairs John obtained the nickname of Lackland, first given him by Henry himself, in jest, after his recovery.

During a fit of penitence, when he thought himself near death, Henry sought reconciliation with Becket. When, however, fresh contradictions arose between them, Henry, in one of those violent accessions of fury described above, unfortunately demanded, before the knights who attended in his bedchamber,[3] "Whether no man loved him enough to revenge the affronts he perpetually received from an insolent priest?" On this hint, Fitz-Urse, Tracy, Britton, and Morville slaughtered Becket, before the altar in his cathedral, the last day of the year 1171.

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[1] Hoveden.

[2] Brompton. Gervase. Hoveden.

[3] Fitz-Stephen calls the four who murdered the archbishop, the barons or servants of the king's bedchamber.

ELEANORA OF AQUITAINE,

QUEEN OF HENRY II.

CHAPTER II.

Eleanora in Aquitaine—Controlled by Normans—Conspires with her sons—Jealousy—Escapes in man's attire—Means to visit her former husband—Seized—Carried prisoner to Bourdeaux—Queen Marguerite, her daughter-in-law—The two queens in captivity—Henry defeats his sons—Eleanora imprisoned in Winchester-palace—Death of Rosamond—Turbulent sons of Henry and Eleanora—Troubadour agitators—Death of the younger king—Temporary reconciliation of king and queen—Prince Richard's wrongs—Princess Alice—Reports of divorce—Eleanora again imprisoned—Songs concerning her—Her subjects' love—Death of prince Geoffrey—Grief of Eleanora—She is brought to Poitou—Claims her dominions of prince Richard—King Henry's disquiets—Death—Burial—Queen in captivity—King Richard releases her—Appoints her queen-regent—Her justice—Treasure-vault at Winchester—Queen-mother's dower—Eleanora sets out for Navarre—Berengaria—Eleanora arrives at Messina with Richard's bride—Departs—Mediates a dispute at Rome—Eleanora's regency—Her toilsome age.

From the time of the marriage of her daughter Matilda to the Lion of Saxony, Eleanora had not visited England. The coronation of her eldest son and the murder of Becket had occurred while she resided in her native province. She had seen her son Richard, in 1170, crowned count of Poitou, with all the ceremonies pertaining to the inauguration of her ancestors. But king Henry only meant his sons to superintend the state and pageantry of a court; he did not intend that they should exercise independent authority, and Richard's will was curbed by the faithful Norman veterans pertaining to his father. These castellans were the real governors of Guienne;

an order of affairs equally disapproved of by prince Richard, queen Eleanora, and their Aquitanian subjects. The queen told her sons[1] Richard and Geoffrey, that Guienne and Poitou owed no obedience to a king of England, or to his Normans: if they owed homage to any one, it was to the sovereign of France; and Richard and Geoffrey resolved to act as their Provençal forefathers of old, and pay no homage to a king of England.

All these fermentations were approaching a violent crisis, when Henry II., in the summer of 1173, arrived, with his son, the young king, in Guienne, to receive the long-delayed homage of count Raymond of Thoulouse, and to inquire into the meaning of some revolts in the south against his Norman castellans, evidently encouraged by his wife and prince Richard. The unsuccessful war waged by Eleanora's first husband against her kinsman of Thoulouse, in order to bring him into submission to her as his *suzeraine*, will be remembered. Count Raymond, although now supported against Eleanora by his former enemy Louis VII., was forced to succumb to the warlike energy of the first Plantagenet king of England. Nevertheless, the last shadow of domestic peace in the English royal family departed on the day when the count of Thoulouse tendered his long-delayed homage to Henry II. as sovereign of Aquitaine. He took the opportunity of his position to sow mischief between Henry and his wife and sons. It was part of the duty of a feudal vassal to give his sovereign advice in time of need; and when Raymond of Thoulouse[2] came to this part of his oath of homage, as he knelt before Henry II., he interpolated it with these emphatic words:—"Then I advise you, king, to beware of your wife and sons." That very night the young king, although he always slept in his father's bedroom, escaped to the protection of his father-in-law, Louis VII. From Paris, he made all manner of undutiful demands on his father. Simultaneously with the flight of young Henry, his brothers, Richard and Geoffrey, decamped for Paris. Richard's grievance was, that his wife, the princess Alice of France, was withheld from him; while Geoffrey insisted, as he had arrived at the mature age of sixteen, that the duchy of Bretagne, and his wife Constance, whose dower it was, should be given to his sole control.

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[1] Script. Rer. Franc.

[2] Ibid.

Henry II. has been taxed with atrocious misconduct in regard to his daughter-in-law, the young duchess of Bretagne, in addition to the crime he really committed against young Alice of France, the spouse of his son Richard. But as the authority, John of Salisbury, calls the princess of Bretagne *Alice*,[1] instead of her real name Constance, it is evident that the same person is meant in both instances. There is no occasion to aggravate the crimes of Henry II., which were superabundant according to the most charitable computation. They proved the punishment of Eleanora, and at the same time first opened her eyes to her own wickedness in her youth. Rumours had been brought to Eleanora, that her husband meditated a divorce; for some lady had been installed, with almost regal honours, in her apartments at Woodstock. Court scandal pointed at her daughter-in-law, the princess Alice, whose youthful charms, it was said, had captivated her father-in-law, and for that reason the damsel was detained from her affianced lord, prince Richard. Enraged at these reports, Eleanora resolved to seek the protection of the king of France; but as she was surrounded by Henry's Norman garrisons, she possessed so little power in her own domains, as to be reduced to quit them in disguise.[2] She assumed male attire, and had travelled part of her way in this dress, when Henry's Norman agents followed and seized her, before she could reach the territories of her divorced husband. They brought her back very rudely, in the disguise she had adopted, and kept her prisoner in Bourdeaux till the arrival of her husband in that city. Her sons pursued their flight safely to the court of the king of France.

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[1] M. Michelet, Hist. de France, tom. iii. p. 206. This great historian suffers his very natural aversion against the Anglo-Norman and Plantagenet kings of England to carry him too far in his charges against them; at the same time, his impartiality and deep research in regard to the good sovereigns of France in the middle ages, renders his work the best general history regarding Louis VI., VII., Philippe-Augustus, and Louis IX. His analysis of the history of Thomas à-Becket, of the war of the Albigenses, and the moral depravity of the south of France, will cause no little astonishment to the modern reader, and will at the same time offer the best extenuation for Eleanora of Aquitaine, educated as she was in such a country.

[2] Gervase.

Now commenced that long, dolorous, and mysterious incarceration, which may be considered the third era in the life of Eleanora of Aquitaine. But while on the continent the imprisonment of queen Eleanora was not stationary; we trace her carried, with her royal husband, in a state of restraint to Barfleur, where he embarked for England. He had another prisoner in company with Eleanora; this was his daughter-in-law, the young Marguerite, who had contumaciously defied him, left the royal robes he had had made for her coronation unworn upon his hands, and scorned the crown he had offered to place on her brow if not consecrated by Becket. With these royal captives Henry II. landed at Southampton, some time in July 1173.[1] Henry proceeded directly to Canterbury, carrying the captive queens in his train. Here he performed the celebrated penance, so often described, at the tomb of Becket. We have no new light to throw on this well-known occurrence, except the extreme satisfaction that his daughter-in-law Marguerite (who was in the city of Canterbury at the time) must have felt, at the sufferings and humiliation of the man who had caused the death of her tutor and friend.

Scarcely had king Henry completed his penance, when tidings were brought him that his high constable had defeated prince Richard and the earl of Leicester, near Bury;[2] and this news was followed by a messenger, announcing the capture, at Alnwick, of William the Lion, king of Scotland, and that the royal prisoner was approaching, with his legs tied beneath his horse,—the most approved method of showing contumely to a captive in the middle ages. All this manifested very clearly to the Anglo-Saxons, that St. Thomas had forgiven his royal friend, and was now exerting himself very actively in his behalf; but when, within a very few hours, intelligence came that the fleet of young king Henry, which had set sail to invade England, had been entirely demolished by a storm, public enthusiasm for the saint knew no bounds. The king went to return thanks to St. Thomas, at the shrine before which he had done penance, and the peace of the kingdom was wholly restored. Then was queen Eleanora consigned to confinement, which lasted, with but short intervals, for sixteen years. Her prison was no worse place than her own royal palace at Winchester,[1] where she was well guarded by her husband's great justiciary and general, Ranulph de Glanville, who likewise had the charge of the royal treasury, at the same place. That Glanville treated her with respect, is evident from some subsequent events.

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[1] Diceto. Dr. Henry has likewise traced the progress of Henry with two queens, from the contemporary chroniclers.

[2] Brompton and Hoveden.

The poor penitent at Godstow expired in the midst of these troubles,—not cut off in her brilliant youth by queen Eleanora, but "from slow decay by pining." She was nearly forty, and was the mother of two sons, both of age. She died, practising the severest penances, in the high odour of sanctity, and may be considered the Magdalen of the middle ages. Tradition says she declared on her death-bed, that when a certain tree[2] she named in the convent-garden was turned to stone, they would know the time she was received into glory.[1] She died deeply venerated by the simple-hearted nuns of Godstow, who would have been infinitely scandalized had she received visits from Henry. Nor does one of the many church manifestoes fulminated against Henry charge him with such an aggravation of his offences as the seduction of a nun; an indubitable proof that the conventual vows had effectually estranged Henry and Rosamond. As the princess Alice was still the betrothed of prince Richard, no one dared to hint at any thing so deeply heinous as her seduction by her father-in-law, for the vengeance of the victorious Henry would have severely visited the promulgators of such scandal. The public, finding that the queen was imprisoned on account of her restless jealousy, compared the circumstance with the death of Rosamond, and revived the old story of Henry's passion for the penitent of Godstow. From this accidental coincidence, of Eleanora's imprisonment and Rosamond's death, the memory of the queen has been unjustly burdened with the murder of her former rival.

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[1] Benedict Abbas, and many chronicles. Benedict was her prime-minister during her long regency in the succeeding reign; therefore he must have known where his royal mistress resided for so long a period of her life.

[2] The body of Rosamond was buried at Godstow, near Oxford, a little nunnery among the rich meadows of Evenlod.–Camden. According to the peculiar custom of the times the grave was not closed, but a sort of temporary tabernacle, called in chronicle a hearse, (of which the modern hatchment is a relic,) was erected over the coffin; this was raised before the high altar, covered with a pall of fair white silk, tapers burnt around it, and banners with emblazonment waved over it. Thus lying in state, it awaited the time for the erection of a monument. Twenty years after, the stern moralist St. Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, in a course of visitation of convents, came to Godstow, and demanded, "Who laid there in such state under that rich hearse?" And when the simple nuns replied, "It was the corpse of their penitent sister, Rosamond Clifford," the reformer, perhaps remembering she was the mother of his superior, the archbishop, declared "that the hearse of a harlot was not a fit spectacle for a quire of virgins to contemplate, nor was the front of God's altar a proper station for it." He then gave orders for the expulsion of the coffin into the churchyard. The sisters of Godstow were forced to obey at the time; but after the death of St. Hugh they gathered the bones of Rosamond into a perfumed bag of leather, which they enclosed in a leaden case, and, with all the pertinacity of woman's affection, deposited them in their original place of interment, pretending that the transformation of the tree had taken place according to Rosamond's prophecy. Southey records a visit to the ruins of Godstow. The principal remnant serves for a cowhouse. A nut-tree grows out of the penitent's grave, which bears every year a profusion of nuts

Henry II. seems to have indulged his eldest and his youngest son with the most ruinous fondness; he always kept them near him if possible, while prince Richard and prince Geoffrey, equally beloved by their mother, were chiefly resident with her on the continent. Prince John had entirely an English education, having for his tutor that learned ecclesiastic, allied to the Welsh royal family, well known to historians as the chronicler Giraldus Cambriensis. But small profit, either to his country or to himself, accrued from the English education of prince John.

Through the mediation of the king of France, his father-in-law, the young king Henry was reconciled to Henry II.

without kernels. King John thought proper to raise a tomb to the memory of Rosamond; it was embossed with fair brass, having an inscription about its edges, in Latin, to this effect:—

"This tomb doth here enclose
The world's most beauteous rose,—
Rose passing sweet erewhile,
Now nought but odour vile."

[1] Boswell's Antiquities.

for a time, and his spouse Marguerite was restored to him. King Louis himself visited England in 1179, for the purpose of praying for the health of his son Philip Augustus at the shrine of St. Thomas à-Becket. Notwithstanding the singular relationship in which the kings of England and France stood to each other, as the former and present husband of the same queen, they appear to have frequently met in friendly intercourse. Henry received Louis with much respect, and rode all night, August 18, with his train, to meet Louis VII. at Dover, where the chroniclers relate that Henry made many curious observations on a total eclipse of the moon, which happened during his nocturnal journey,—a fact reminding us of his fondness for scientific questions, as recorded in his character by Peter of Blois.

Henry II. afterwards took his royal guest to his Winchester-palace, where he showed him his treasure-vault, and invited him to take any thing he chose. Queen Eleanora was then at Winchester, but whether she met her divorced lord, is not recorded. In the course of a few months Louis VII. died, of a cold caught at his vigils near the tomb of St. Thomas à-Becket. Such was the end of the first husband of Eleanora of Aquitaine.

To enter into a minute detail of all the rebellions and insurrections undertaken by the insurgent sons of Eleanora, during their mother's imprisonment, were an endless, and indeed an impracticable task. It must suffice to hold up a picture of the manners and temper of the people over whom she was the hereditary sovereign, and who disdained the rule of any stranger, however nearly connected with the heiress of their country. All the elements of strife were kept in a perpetual state of activity, by the combativeness of the troubadours, whose *tensons*, or war-songs, perpetually urged the sons of Eleanora to battle, when they were inclined to repose. Such, among many of inferior genius, was Bertrand de Born, viscount de Hauteforte, whom Dante has introduced with such terrific grandeur in his *Inferno*, as the mischief-maker between Henry II. and prince John. But he began this work with Henry's eldest and best beloved son. Bertrand, and all the other troubadours, hated Henry II., whom they considered as an interloper, and a persecutor of their rightful princess, the duchess of Aquitaine, his wife. It is said that Bertrand was in love with queen Eleanora, for he addresses many covert declarations to a "royal Eleanora" in his *chansons*, adding exultingly, that "they were not unknown to her, for she can *read!*"[1] But there is a mistake of the mother for the daughter, since prince Richard, who was a brother troubadour, encouraged Bertrand in a passion for his beautiful sister, Eleanora;[2] and to the daughter of the queen of England, not to herself, these passionate declarations were addressed.

In the midst of insurrection against his sire, the mainspring of which was the incessant struggle to obtain an independent sovereignty, young Henry Plantagenet died, at the castle of Martel, in Guienne, in his twenty-eighth year. When he found his illness mortal, he was seized with deep remorse for his frequent rebellions against his ever-indulgent father. He sent to king Henry to implore his pardon for his transgressions. Before he expired, he had the satisfaction of receiving a ring from his sire, as a token of forgiveness. On the receipt of this pledge of affection, the penitence of the dying prince became passionate; when expiring, he caused himself to be taken out of bed, and died on sackcloth and ashes, as an atonement for his sins. The death of their heir, for a short time reconciled queen Eleanora and her royal husband. Henry mourned for the loss of this son with the deep grief of David over Absalom. The contemporary chroniclers agree, that from 1183 to 1184, when the princess Matilda, with her husband Henry the Lion of Saxony, sought refuge in England, the captive queen was restored to her rank at the English court.[3]

Prince Richard, now become the heir of Henry and Eleanora, remained some time quiet, in order to see how his father would conduct himself towards him. Although he had arrived at the age of twenty-seven, and the princess to whom he was half married was twenty-three, she was still detained from him. Richard had formed at Guienne[1] an attachment to a virtuous and beautiful princess, the daughter of a neighbouring potentate, and he was anxious that his mysterious entanglement with the princess Alice should be brought to a termination.

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[1] Count Thierry.

[2] The royal family considered the love of the noble troubadour as a mere poetical passion, and the young princess was married very passively to Alphonso king of Castile. It was no trifle in the eyes of Bertrand, and the cause, doubtless, of the fierce restlessness with which he disturbed the royal family during the life of Henry II.—Sismondi.

[3] Benedict Abbas.

Richard seems to have met with nought but injury from his father; nor was his brother Geoffrey much better treated. The continual urgency of prince Richard, in regard to the princess Alice, was met with constant evasion. Reports were renewed, of the king's intention to divorce queen Eleanora; and the legate resident in England, cardinal Hugo, was consulted on the practicability of this divorce, and likewise on the possibility of obtaining a dispensation for the king's marriage with some person nearly allied to him.[2] The consequence was, that prince Richard flew to arms, and got possession of his mother's inheritance, while queen Eleanora was again committed to some restraint in Winchester-palace.

Meantime, the lengthened imprisonment of queen Eleanora infuriated her subjects in Aquitaine. The troubadours roused the national spirit in favour of their native princess by such strains as these, which were the war-songs that animated the contest maintained by Richard in the name of his mother:—"Daughter of Aquitania,[3] fair fruitful vine! thou hast been torn from thy country, and led into a strange land. Thy harp is changed into the voice of mourning, and thy songs into sounds of lamentation. Brought up in delicacy and abundance, thou enjoyedst a royal liberty, living in the bosom of wealth, delighting thyself with the sports of thy women, with their songs, to the sound of the lute and tabor: and now thou mournest, thou weepest, thou consumest thyself with sorrow. Return, poor prisoner—return to thy cities, if thou canst: and if thou canst not, weep, and say 'Alas! how long is my exile!' Weep, weep, and say 'My tears are my bread, both day and night!' Where are thy guards, thy royal escort? where thy maiden train, thy councillors of state? Some of them, dragged far from thy country, have suffered an ignominious death; others have been deprived of sight; others banished and wandering in divers places. Thou criest, but no one hears thee!—for the king of the North keeps thee shut up like a town that is besieged. Cry, then,—cease not to cry! Raise thy voice like a trumpet, that thy sons may hear it; for the day is approaching when thy sons shall deliver thee, and then shalt thou see again thy native land!" These expressions of tenderness for the daughter of the old national chiefs of Aquitaine are followed by a cry of malediction against the towns which, either from force or necessity, still adhered to the king of the foreign race:—"Woe to the traitors which are in Aquitaine, for the day of their chastisement is at hand! La Rochelle dreads that day. She doubles her trenches, she girds herself all round with the sea, and the noise of her great works is heard beyond the mountains. Fly before Richard, duke of Aquitaine, ye who inhabit the coast! for he shall overthrow the glorious of the land,—he shall annihilate, from the greatest to the least, all who deny him entrance into Saintonge!" The manner of Eleanora's imprisonment was as mysterious to her contemporaries and subjects as it is to her modern historians, if we may take literally the query propounded in one of her troubadour war-songs.[1] "Tell me, double eagle, tell me where wast thou when thine eaglets, flying from their paternal nest, dared to put forth their claws against the king of the North?"

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[1] Hoveden. Dr. Henry.

[2] Gervase.

[3] Chronic. Ricardi Pictaviensis, ap. Script. Rer. Franc.

For nearly two years, the Angevin subjects of Henry II. and the Aquitanian subjects of his captive queen gave battle to each other; and, from Rochelle to Bayonne, the dominions of queen Eleanora were in a state of insurrection. The contemporary chroniclers, who beheld this contest of husband against wife, and sons against father, instead of looking upon it as the natural consequence of a divided rule in an extended empire, swayed by persons of great talents who had received a corrupt education, considered it as the influence of an evil destiny presiding over the race of Plantagenet, and as the punishment of some great crime.

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[1] *Tenson* quoted by M. Michelet, in his History of France. Eleanora is designated in the prophecies of Merlin as the double eagle, on account of the double sovereignty she had possessed, as queen of France and then of England.

Many sinister stories, relating to the royal family, were current. Queen Eleanora, when pursuing, in her early days, her guilty career as queen of France,[1] it was whispered, had been too intimate with Geoffrey Plantagenet, her husband's father. Then the story of Foulke the Red,[2] the first that took the name of Plantagenet, was revived, and the murder of his brother discussed. Likewise, the wonderful tale was remembered of the witch-countess of Anjou, Henry II.'s great-grandmother, wife to Foulke le Rechin, whose cognomen means 'the quarreller.' This count, having observed that his wife seldom went to church, (and when she did, quitted it always at the elevation of the Host,) thought proper not only to force her to mass, but made four of his esquires hold her forcibly by the mantle when she was there; when, lo! at the moment of consecration, the countess, untying the mantle by which she was held, left it in the hands of the esquires, and flying through the window of the chapel, was never heard of more. A great thunder-storm happened at the moment of her departure; a dreadful smell of brimstone remained, which "no singing of the monks could allay." The truth of this marvellous tale probably is, that the countess was killed by lightning, in a church injured by a thunder-storm. Her ungracious descendant, Richard Cœur de Lion, used to tell this tale with great glee to his knights at Poitou; and added, "Is it to be wondered that, having sprung from such a stock, we live on bad terms with each other? From Satan we sprang, and to Satan we must go."

Geoffrey held out Limoges, in his mother's name, with great pertinacity. Among other envoys came a Norman clerk, holding a cross in his hand, and supplicated Geoffrey not to imitate the crime of Absalom. "What!" said Geoffrey, "wouldst thou have me deprive myself of mine inheritance? It is the fate of our family that none shall love the rest. Hatred is our rightful heritage," added he, bitterly, "and none will ever succeed in depriving us of it." During a conference which prince Geoffrey soon after had with his father, in the market-place at Limoges, for the purpose of discussing peace, the Aquitanian soldiers and supporters of Geoffrey, full of rage at the sight of the monarch who kept their duchess imprisoned, broke the truce, by aiming from the castle a shower of cross-bow shafts at the person of the king, one of which came so close as to shoot his horse through the ear. The king presented the arrow to Geoffrey, saying, with tears, "Tell me, Geoffrey, what has thy unhappy father done to thee, to deserve that thou, his son, shouldst make him a mark for thine archers?" Geoffrey was greatly shocked at this accident, of which he declared he was wholly innocent. It was the outbreak of popular fury in his mother's subjects.

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[1] Brompton.

[2] Script. Rer. Franc.

When prince Richard and prince Geoffrey were not combating with their father's subjects, they employed themselves in making war on each other. Just before the death of Geoffrey, his brother Richard invaded his dominions in Bretagne with fire and sword, on some unaccountable affront, blown into a blaze by the *sirventes* of the troubadours. After this faction was pacified, Geoffrey went to assist at a grand tournament at Paris, where he was flung from his steed in the midst of the *mêlée,* and was trodden to death beneath the feet of the coursers. He was buried at Nôtre Dame. This was the second son queen Eleanora had lost since her imprisonment, in the very flower of his youth and strength. Like his brother Henry, this prince was remarkable for his manly beauty, and the agile grace of his martial figure. His death afflicted his mother equally with that of her first-born; for Geoffrey had been brought up a Provençal, and had shown far more resentment for his mother's imprisonment than the young king Henry. That Eleanora loved both with all a mother's passionate tenderness, we have the evidence of her own most eloquent words. In one of her letters to the pope, preserved in the collection of Peter of Blois, she says,—"The younger king and the count of Bretagne both sleep in dust, while their most wretched mother is compelled to live on, though tortured by the irremediable recollections of the dead."

The misfortunes of prince Arthur, duke of Bretagne, thus began before his birth, and were strengthened by his baptism, on the 29th March, 1187. The duchess Constance brought him into the world a few months after the death of his father. Eleanora, the eldest child of Constance, had been proclaimed heiress of Bretagne, but was disinherited by the birth of her brother. "It was the pleasure of king Henry and queen Eleanora that the infant should be named Henry; but the Bretons chose to indulge their natural prejudices in favour of king Arthur, whom they claim as their countryman; and as they looked forward to the boy as the possible heir of England, they insisted on giving the last descendant of the Armorican princes that favourite name. This was the first public displeasure given by Constance to the parents of her husband: their enmity increased with years."—"Great scandal arose after the death of Geoffrey, regarding the duchess Constance and her brother-in-law John: till his marriage with Isabella of Angoulême, he was constantly 'haunting her;' and on this account, it is supposed, Henry II., after the birth of her posthumous son Arthur, forced the duchess to marry the earl of Chester, as prince John's attentions to his sister-in-law caused considerable comment."[1]

Prince Richard having obtained possession of the whole of Aquitaine, his father commanded him to surrender it to his mother, queen Eleanora, whom he had brought as far as Normandy to claim her right.[2] The moment the prince received this mandate he gave up the territory, and hastened to Normandy to welcome the queen, and congratulate her on her restoration to freedom. This release is recorded by the friend of the queen, abbot Benedict. From him we learn that, during the year 1186, Eleanora exercised sovereign power at Bourdeaux, and then resigned it to her son Richard, who in the mean time had made his peace with his father. Henry II. was with his queen during this period; for Benedict declares that, the following April, they sailed from Barfleur to England. Eleanora was again put under some restraint at Winchester-palace, which she quitted no more till the death of king Henry, three years afterwards.

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[1] Carte.

[2] Benedict Abbas.

The commission of moral wrong had involved Henry, great and powerful as he was, in a net, within whose inextricable folds he either vainly struggled, or awaited the possibility of deliverance by the death of the queen. If Eleanora had preceded him to the grave, as in the common course of nature might have been expected, he would have sued instantly for a dispensation to marry the affianced bride of his son. While the queen lived, this could not be done without an explosion of scandal which would have dishonoured him in the eyes of all Europe. Henry had only two alternatives; either to permit his heir to marry the princess Alice, or to shorten the life of the queen Eleanora by violent means. Although his principles were not sufficiently firm to resist temptations to vice, yet he was not abandoned enough to commit deliberately either atrocity. So time wore uneasily on, till prince Richard attained the age of thirty-four, and Alice that of thirty; while the king still invented futile excuses to keep both in this miserable state of entanglement, wherein Richard could neither free himself from Alice, nor give his hand to any other bride. Yet Richard, to further his own ends, made the brother of Alice believe that he was willing to complete his engagement. "It was the wish of Henry II. to crown his son John king of England during his lifetime, and to give Richard all his dominions that lay beyond the English sea. Richard was not content; he came to the king of France, and cried for aid, saying, 'Sire, for God's sake suffer me not to be disinherited thus by my sire. I am engaged to your sister Alice, who ought by right to be my wife. Help me to maintain my rights and hers.'"[1] The king of France, after vainly seeking for explanation of the reason why his sister was not married to her betrothed, made, with prince Richard, an appeal to arms. King Philip contrived to induce prince John to join in the rebellion. When Henry heard that this idolized child of his old age had followed the insurgent example of his brethren, he threw himself into a paroxysm of rage, and invoked the bitterest curses on his head, and that of prince Richard: he cursed the day of his own birth; and, after giving orders to his painter at Windsor to paint a device, of a young eaglet pecking out the eyes of an eagle, as a reproach to prince John, he set out for the continent, in an agonized state of mind.

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[1] Bernard le Trésorier.—Guizot's Chron.

After waging, for the first time in his life, an unsuccessful war, king Henry agreed to meet his son Richard and the king of France at Vezalai. As the king was on his progress to this congress, he fell ill at Chinon, after indulging in one of his fits of violent passion.[1] Finding that his life was departing, he caused himself to be carried before the high altar of the cathedral, where he expired in the supporting arms of Geoffrey, the youngest son of Rosamond, who was the only one of his children from whom he received filial attention in his last moments. Before he died, he spoke earnestly to him, and gave him a ring of great value; then laying his head on the bosom of Geoffrey,[2] his spirit departed, leaving his features still convulsed with the agony of rage which had hastened his end.

When the news was brought to Richard, that the crown of England had devolved upon him by the sudden death of his father, he was torn with remorse and regret. He went to meet the royal corpse at Fontevraud, the place of interment pointed out by the will of the deceased monarch. King Henry, when he was carried forth to be buried, was first apparelled in his princely robes, having his crown on his head, gloves on his hands, and shoes on his feet, wrought with gold; spurs on his heels, a ring of gold on his finger, a sceptre in his hand, his sword by his side, and his face uncovered. But this regalia was of a strange nature, for the corpse of Henry, like that of the Conqueror, had been stripped and plundered; and when those who were charged with the funeral demanded the ornaments in which Henry was to lie in state, the treasurer, as a favour, sent a ring of little value, and an old sceptre. As for the crown with which the warlike brow of Henry was encircled, it was but the gold fringe from a lady's petticoat, torn off for the occasion; and in this odd attire, the greatest monarch in the world went down to his last abode.[3]

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[1] Which Brompton declares was the immediate cause of death.

[2] Lord Lyttelton.

[3] J. P. Andrews.

Thus he was conveyed to the abbey of Fontevraud, where he lay with his face uncovered, showing, by the contraction of his features, the violent rage in which he departed. When Richard entered the abbey he shuddered, and prayed some moments before the altar, when the nose and mouth of his father began to bleed so profusely, that the monk in attendance kept incessantly wiping the blood from his face. Richard testified the most poignant remorse at this sight. He wept bitterly; and, prostrating himself, prayed earnestly, under the mingled stimulus of grief and superstition, and then rising, he departed, and looked on the face of his sire no more.[1] Henry II. died July 6th, 1189.

The first step taken by Richard I. on his accession to the English crown was, to order his mother's release from her constrained retirement at Winchester-palace. From a captive, queen Eleanora in one moment became a sovereign; for the reins of the English government were placed in her hands at the time of her release. She made a noble use of her authority, according to a manuscript cited by Tyrrell:—"Queen Eleanora, directly she was liberated from her restraint at Winchester, was invested with full powers as regent, which she most beneficially exercised, going in person from city to city, setting free all those confined under the Norman game-laws, which in the latter part of Henry's life were cruelly enforced. When she released prisoners, it was on condition that they prayed for the soul of her late husband. She likewise declared she took this measure for the benefit of his soul."

Her son had given her full power, but, to her great honour, Eleanora did not use it against those who had been her gaolers or enemies. Her regency was entirely spent in acts of mercy and wisdom, and her discriminating acumen in the prisoners she liberated may be judged by the following list:—She liberated fully,—"all confined for breach of forest laws, who were accused of no further crime. All who were outlawed for the same, she invited back to their homes and families. All who had been seized by the king's arbitrary commands, and were not accused by their hundred or county, she set free. But all malefactors accused on good and lawful evidence were to be kept in prison, without bail."

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[1] Count Thierry, from Norman chronicles.

When we consider Eleanora going from city to city, examining thus into the wrongs of a government that had become arbitrary, and seeing justice done to the lowest, we are apt to think that her imprisonment had improved her disposition. The queen-regent next ordained that "every freeman of the whole kingdom should swear that he would bear faith to his lord, Richard, son of king Henry and queen Eleanora, for the preservation of life, limbs, and terrene honour, as his liege lord, against all living; and that he would be obedient to his laws, and assist him in the preservation of peace and justice."[1]

Eleanora showed so little distaste to the Winchester-palace, that she returned thither, after her justiciary progress, to await the arrival of her son from the coast of Normandy. It appears that king Richard, when he gave commands for his mother's release, ordered her castellan, the keeper of the treasure-vault at Winchester, Ranulph de Glanville, to be thrown into a dungeon in Winchester-castle, and loaded with fetters weighing a thousand pounds.[2]

Our ancient chroniclers, when labouring to reconcile the prophecies of Merlin with the events of English history, while hunting after the impossible, very often start some particulars which would otherwise have slept shrouded in the dust of the grave. Thus, speaking of the liberation of Eleanora of Aquitaine by her son, Richard I., Matthew Paris says she is designated, by Merlin's sentence, *Aquila rupti fœderis tertiâ nidificatione gaudebit*; 'the destructive eagle shall rejoice in her third nestling'—"Eleanora," pursues Matthew, "is the eagle, for she spreads her wings over two nations, England and Aquitaine; also, by reason of her *excessive beauty*, she destroyed or injured nations. She was separated from the king of France by reason of consanguinity, and from the king of England by divorce *upon suspicion*, and kept in close confinement. She rejoiced in her third nestling, since Richard, her third son, honoured her with all reverence after releasing her from prison." If Matthew would imply that Henry confined Eleanora for impropriety of conduct, he is not supported by other authors.

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[1] This is the first oath of allegiance ever taken in England to an uncrowned king.

[2] Tyrrell, to whose most learned and indefatigable research the elucidation of many dark passages of Eleanora's life is owing.

King Richard I. landed at Portsmouth, August the 12th, 1189. Three days after, he arrived at his mother's court at Winchester, where his first care was directed to his father's treasure. After he had conferred with his mother, he ordered before him Ranulph de Glanville, who gave him so good an account of the secrets of the Winchester treasure-vault, that he set him at liberty, and ever after treated him with confidence. Either Ranulph de Glanville had behaved to the queen, when his prisoner, with all possible respect, or Eleanora was of a very magnanimous disposition, and forbore prejudicing her son against her late castellan. Glanville gave up to the king the enormous sum of nine hundred thousand pounds, besides valuable jewels. At his first seizure, only 100,000 marks were found in the treasure-vault, which, it seems, possessed some intricacies only known to Glanville.[1] The king's next care was to settle the revenue of the mother he so passionately loved, and whose wrongs he had so fiercely resented. Her dower was rendered equal to those of the queens Matilda Atheling and Matilda of Boulogne.

Richard returned to England with the full intention of immediately joining the crusade, now warmly preached throughout Christendom. In furtherance of this cherished purpose, preparations were instantly made for his early coronation, which took place on the 3rd of September, 1189, three weeks only after he reached the shores of his future kingdom. As the etiquette of the queen-mother's recent widowhood prevented her from sharing in this splendid festival, all women were forbidden to be present at its celebration. The chroniclers declare that Richard issued a proclamation the day before, debarring all women[1] and Jews from entering the precincts of Westminster-abbey at the time of his inauguration,—a classification of persons greatly impugning the gallantry of the lion-hearted king, when we remember the odium attached to the name of a Jew. The Provençal alliance had produced a prodigious influx of this usurious race into England. As they enjoyed high privileges in the hereditary dominions of queen Eleanora, they supposed they were secure under her son's government. Believing money would buy a place everywhere, they flocked to the abbey, bearing a rich present; but the populace set upon them and slaughtered them, being excited to a religious mania by the preaching of the crusade. The massacre of these unfortunate money-brokers was not perpetrated with the connivance of either king Richard or the queen-mother, since Brompton expressly declares that the ringleaders were, by the king's orders, tried and put to death. Alice, the long-betrothed bride of Richard, was neither married nor crowned. On the contrary, she was committed to the same species of restraint, by the orders of the queen, in which she herself had been so long held captive. The princess Alice had been twenty-two years without leaving England; and as she was the only person on whom Eleanora retaliated any part of her wrongs, the inference must be drawn that she considered Alice as the cause of them.

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[1] Hoveden. Brompton. Tyrrell. Paris. The singular employment of warlike barons as justiciaries, and the combination of the offices of general and of lawyer in one man, are strange features in the Norman and Angevin domination in England. This Ranulph de Glanville is an instance; he was Henry's great general, who defeated and took prisoner William the Lion of Scotland; but he is only known to our gentlemen of the bar as the author of "Glanville's Institutes,"—this steel-clad baron being the first who reduced the laws of England to a written code. To make the contrast with modern times still stronger, the great legalist died crusading, having, either to please Cœur de Lion, or to atone for his sins both as lawyer and general, taken up the cross, for the purpose of battling "Mahoun and Termagaunt."

Eleanora departed for Aquitaine as soon as her son had settled her English dower, and Richard embarked at Dover, for Calais, to join the crusade, taking with him but ten ships from the English ports. His troops were disembarked, and he marched across France to his mother's dominions, where he formally resigned to her the power he had exercised, during his father's lifetime, as her deputy. Richard appointed the rendezvous of the crusade at Messina, and directing his mother to meet him there, he set sail from Marseilles for Sicily; while Eleanora undertook a journey to Navarre, to claim for him the hand of Berengaria, the daughter of king Sancho.

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[1] Hoveden. Brompton. M. Paris. The last says, all women of *bad* character.

Richard had much to effect at Messina, before he commenced the crusade. Before he struck a blow for Christendom, he was obliged to right the wrongs of his sister Joanna, queen of Sicily, the youngest daughter of Eleanora and Henry II. William the Good, through the recommendations of Peter of Blois, (who had formerly been his tutor,) became the husband of Joanna Plantagenet. The Sicilian ambassador granted Joanna an immense dower; but when the aged bridegroom found that his young queen was still more beautiful and sweet-tempered than her father's chaplain Peter had set forth, he greatly augmented her jointure. The king of Sicily died childless, leaving his young widow immense riches in his will. King Tancred robbed her of these, and of her dower; and, to prevent her complaints, enclosed her in prison at Messina. It was this outrage Richard hastened there to redress. But the list of goods the fair widow directed her brother to claim of Tancred, could surely have only existed in a catalogue of Aladdin's household furniture:—an arm chair of solid gold;[1] footstools of gold; a table twelve feet long, with trestles of gold; besides urns and vases of the same precious metal. These reasonable demands were enforced by the arm of the mighty Richard, who was as obstinate and wilful as Achilles himself.

Tancred deserves pity, when we consider the extraordinary nature of the bequests of his predecessor. However, he compounded for dower and legacy, at last, with the enormous payment of 40,000 ounces of gold. This treasure, with the royal widow herself, were consigned to Richard forthwith. Thus was a companion provided for Richard's expected bride, the elegant and refined Berengaria, who, under the conduct of Eleanora of Aquitaine, was daily expected. Richard was so well pleased with the restoration of his sister and her treasures, that he asked

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[1] Hoveden and Vinisauf; likewise Piers of Langtoft, who mentions many other curious articles.

Tancred's daughter in marriage for his then acknowledged heir, Arthur of Bretagne.[1]

During this negotiation Eleanora arrived in Messina,[2] bringing with her the long-beloved Berengaria. Although years had elapsed since Eleanora had seen her daughter Joanna, she tarried but four days in her company, and then sailed for Rome. There is reason to suppose that her errand was to settle a dispute which had arisen between king Richard and his half-brother Geoffrey, the son of Rosamond, whom the king had appointed archbishop of York, according to his father's dying request, but had required an enormous sum from the revenues of the archbishopric.[3] Queen Eleanora returned to England,[4] with her friend the archbishop of Rouen; he was soon after appointed its governor, in place of Longchamp, who had convulsed the country by his follies.

We have seen Eleanora taken from captivity by her son Richard, and invested with the high authority of queen-regent: there is no reason to suppose that that authority was revoked; for, in every emergency during the king's absence, she appears as the guiding power. For this purpose she absented herself from Aquitaine, whose government she placed in the hands of a deputy, her grandson Otho of Saxony;[5] and at the end of the reign of Cœur de Lion, we find her, according to the words of Matthew Paris, "governing England with great wisdom and popularity." Queen Eleanora, when thus arduously engaged in watching over the interests of her best-beloved son, was approaching her seventieth year,—an age when rest is imperiously demanded by the human frame. But years of toil still remained before her, ere death closed her weary pilgrimage in 1204; and these years were laden with sorrows, which drew from her that pathetic alteration of the regal style, preserved in one of her letters to the pope on occasion of the captivity of Cœur de Lion, where she declares herself—

"Eleanora,[6] by the wrath of God queen of England."

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[1] The documents pertaining to this contract prove that Arthur was then considered by his uncle as the heir of England.—Fœdera, vol. i.

[2] See the succeeding biography. [3] Rapin, vol. i. 248. [4] Speed, 518.

[5] Tyrrell. [6] Peter of Blois' Epistles.

Not only in this instance, but in several others, traits of the subdued spirit of Eleanora are to be discovered; for the extreme mobility of her spirits diffused itself even over the cold records of state. When swayed by calmer feelings, she styles herself "Ælienora, by the grace of God, *humbly* queen of England."[1]

Eleanora of Aquitaine is among the very few women who have atoned for an ill-spent youth by a wise and benevolent old age. As a sovereign, she ranks among the greatest of female rulers.[2]

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[1] Rymer, vol. i.

[2] To prevent repetition, the rest of her life is comprehended in the memoirs of her daughters-in-law, Berengaria and Isabella.

BERENGARIA OF NAVARRE,

QUEEN-CONSORT OF RICHARD I.

Mutual attachment of Berengaria and Richard—Berengaria's descent—Berengaria demanded in marriage—Travels with queen Eleanora—Waits with her at Brindisi—Is consigned to queen Joanna—Queen Eleanora's regency—Redeems, as her queen-gold, the cup of the monks of Bury—Embarks for Palestine—Berengaria lands in a storm at Cyprus—Nuptials at Cyprus—Costume of queen Berengaria—Crowned queen of England and Cyprus—Berengaria sails for Palestine—Received by king Philip at Acre—Her residence there—Berengaria embarks with Joanna—Richard shipwrecked—Imprisoned—Berengaria at Rome—The queens escorted by count Raymond St. Gilles—Queen Joanna married to him—Misfortunes of king Richard—Eleanora's regency—Her letter to the pope—She again redeems the gold cup of the monks of Bury—Berengaria resigns the captive Cypriot—Berengaria's brother—Queen-mother returns with Richard to England—She remits her queen-gold a third time to the monks of Bury—Berengaria forsaken—Richard's penitence—Berengaria's goodness—Follows Richard to war—Devoted love—King's death—Death of queen Joanna—Berengaria's dower—Her pecuniary troubles—Builds abbey of Espan—Resides there—Dies there—Buried—Effigy—Character.

Berengaria, the beautiful daughter of Sancho the Wise, king of Navarre, was first seen by Richard Cœur de Lion, when count of Poitou,[1] at a grand tournament given by her gallant brother at Pampeluna, her native city. Richard was then captivated by the beauty of Berengaria, but his engagement to the fair and frail Alice of France prevented him from offering her his hand. Berengaria may be considered a Provençal princess by language and education, though she

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[1] See the preceding biography.

Berengaria of Navarre.

London. Henry Colburn 1841.

was Spanish by descent. Her mighty sire, Sancho the Wise, had for his immediate ancestor Sancho the Great, called the emperor of all Spain, although he inherited but the little kingdom of Navarre. He married Beatrice, daughter to Alphonso king of Castile, by whom he had three children, Berengaria, Blanche, and one son, Sancho, surnamed 'the Strong,'—a hero celebrated by the Provençal poets for his gallant exploits against the Moors; for he defeated the Miramolin, and broke with his battle-axe[1] the chains that guarded the camp of the infidel, which chains were afterwards transferred to the armorial bearings of Navarre.

An ardent friendship had subsisted, from boyhood, between Richard and Sancho the Strong, the gallant brother of Berengaria. A similarity of pursuits strengthened the intimacy of Richard with the royal family of Navarre. The father and brother of Berengaria were celebrated for their skill and judgment in Provençal poetry.[2] Berengaria was herself a learned princess; and Richard, who was not only a troubadour-poet, but, as acting sovereign of Aquitaine, was the prince and judge of all troubadours, became naturally drawn into close bonds of amity with a family, whose tastes and pursuits were similar to his own.

No one can marvel that the love of the ardent Richard should be strengthened when he met the beautiful, the cultivated, and virtuous Berengaria, in the familiar intercourse which sprang from his friendship with her gallant brother;[3] but a long and secret engagement, replete with "hope deferred," was the fate of Richard the Lion-hearted and the fair flower of Navarre.

Our early historians first mention the attachment of Richard and Berengaria about the year 1177. If we take that event for a datum, even allowing the princess to have been very young when she attracted the love of Richard, she must have been twenty-six, at least, before the death of his father placed him at liberty to demand her hand. Richard had another motive for his extreme desire for this alliance; he considered that his beloved mother, queen Eleanora, was deeply indebted to king Sancho, the father of Berengaria, because he had pleaded her cause with Henry II., and obtained some amelioration of her imprisonment.

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[1] Atlas Historique.

[2] Chronicle of Navarre.

[3] Richard and his nephew, the troubadour count of Champagne, who afterwards married Blanche, the younger sister of Berengaria, were, with Sancho the Strong, on the most intimate terms of friendship, being *fratres jurati*, or sworn brothers, according to a custom of the chivalric ages.

Soon after Richard ascended the English throne, he sent his mother, queen Eleanora, to the court of her friend Sancho the Wise, to demand the princess Berengaria in marriage; "for," says Vinisauf, "he had long loved the elegant girl." Sancho the Wise not only received the proposition with joy, but entrusted Berengaria to the care of queen Eleanora. The royal ladies travelled from the court of Navarre together, across Italy to Naples,[1] where they found the ships belonging to Eleanora had arrived in the bay. But etiquette forbade Berengaria to approach her lover till he was free from the claims of Alice; therefore she sojourned with queen Eleanora at Brindisi, in the spring of 1191, waiting the message from king Richard, announcing that he was free to receive the hand of the princess of Navarre.

It was at Messina that the question of the engagement between the princess Alice and the king of England was debated with Philip Augustus, her brother; and more than once, the potentates assembled for the crusade expected that the forces of France and England would be called into action, to decide the right of king Richard to give his hand to another lady than the sister of the king of France. The rhymes of Piers of Langtoft recapitulate these events with brevity and quaintness:—

"Then spake king Philip, and in grief said,
'My sister Alice is now forsaken,
Since one, of more riches, of Navarre hast thou taken.'
When king Richard understood what king Philip had sworn,
Before clergy he stood, and proved on that morn,
That Alice to his father a child had borne,
Which his sire king Henry held for his own:
A maiden-child it was, and now dead it is.
'This was a great trespass, and against mine own witte
If I Alice take.'"

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[1] Roger of Wendover, Dr. Giles' translation; vol. ii. p. 95. He says queen Eleanora crossed "Mount Janus and the plains of Italy with Berengaria."

King Philip contended that Richard held in hand his sister's dower, the good city of Gisors. Upon this, the king of England brought the matter to a conclusion, in these words:

"'Now,' said king Richard, 'that menace may not be,
For thou shalt have ward of Gisors thy citée,
And treasure ilk a deal.'
Richard yielded him his right, his treasure and his town,
Before witness at sight, (of clerk and eke baron.)
His sister he might marry, wherever God might like,
And, to make certainty, Richard a quittance took."

The French contemporary chroniclers, who are exceedingly indignant at the repudiation of their princess, attribute it solely to Eleanora's influence. Bernard, the treasurer, says, "The old queen could not endure that Richard should espouse Alice, but demanded the sister of the king of Navarre for a wife for her son. At this the king of Navarre was right joyful, and she travelled with queen Eleanora to Messina. When she arrived, Richard was absent; but queen Joanna was there, preparing herself to embark next day. The queen of England could not tarry, but said to Joanna,—'Fair daughter, take this damsel for me to the king your brother, and tell him I command him to espouse her speedily.'"[1] Piers of Langtoft resumes:—

"She beleft Berengere,
At Richard's costage,
Queen Joanne held her dear;
They lived as doves in cage."

Eleanora commenced her journey to Italy, where she had a conference with pope Celestine, at the castle of Radulphi.[2] The aged queen took upon herself the cares of regency for her son Richard. She was in England very soon after his marriage with Berengaria was made public, for she there claimed her share of queen-gold in the fines or aid contributed by the feudal tenants of the crown on account of that marriage; which fact the following anecdote will authenticate. The monks of Bury contrived to dispense with their share of the payment; for, pleading scarcity of coin, they sent in, to make up their aid to the king's marriage, a cup of gold, worth one hundred marks, which Henry II. had given to the shrine of Edmund, martyr and king. The queen-regent Eleanora recognised the cup, and taking it from the heap of treasure sent into the royal treasury, she said, "I claim this as my portion, being my queen-gold. It was given to the monks of Bury by Henry, my late lord; and I give it back to them, on condition that they pray for me and for his soul with increased fervency."[1]

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[1] Bernard le Trésorier.

[2] Her letter to pope Celestine.—Epistles of Peter of Blois, cxlvi.

At the arrival of Berengaria in Sicily, king Richard and king Tancred were absent on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Agatha, at Catania, where Tancred must have devoutly prayed for the riddance of his guest. Richard here presented the Sicilian king with a famous sword, pretending it was Caliburn, the brand of king Arthur, lately found at Glastonbury during his father's antiquarian researches for the tomb of that king. Richard then embarked in his favourite galley, named by him 'Trenc-the-mere.'[2] He had previously, in honour of his betrothment, instituted an order of twenty-four knights, who pledged themselves in a fraternity with the king to scale the walls of Acre; and that they might be known in the storming of that city, the king appointed them to wear a blue band of leather on the left leg, from which they were called 'knights of the Blue Thong.'[3]

The season of Lent prevented the immediate marriage of Richard and his betrothed; and, as etiquette did not permit the unwedded maiden Berengaria to embark in the Trenc-the-mere under the immediate protection of her lover, she sailed, in company with queen Joanna, in one of the strongest ships, under the care of a brave knight, called Stephen de Turnham. After these arrangements, Richard led the van of the fleet in Trenc-the-mere, bearing a huge lantern at her poop to rally the fleet in the darkness of night. Thus, with a hundred and fifty ships and fifty galleys, and accompanied by his bride and his sister, did lion-hearted Richard hoist sail for Palestine, where Philip Augustus had already indolently commenced the siege of Acre.

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[1] Chronicle of Josceline of Brakelonde, monk of Bury St. Edmunds.

[2] Literally, meaning *cut-the-sea*. It is Piers of Langtoft who preserves the name of this vessel.

[3] Hoveden. Sir Egerton Bridges names Roger St. John as one of these early knights of the Garter. St. George was the tutelary saint of Aquitaine; his name was the war-cry of the dukedom. King Richard had a vision of St. George when he undertook the crusade, and many indications throughout the chroniclers show that St. George was considered the patron-saint of the expedition.

> "Syrian virgins wail and weep,
> English Richard ploughs the deep."

But we must turn a deaf ear to the bewitching metre of polished verse, and quote details taken by Piers of Langtoft from the Provençal comrade of Richard and Berengaria's crusade voyage:—

> "Till king Richard be forward he may have no rest,
> Acres then is his tryste upon Saracen fiends,[1]
> To venge Jèsu Christ hitherward he wends.
> The king's sister Joanne, and lady Berengare,
> Foremost sailed of ilk one; next them his chancellor,
> Roger Mancel. The chancellor so hight,
> His tide fell not well; a tempest on him light,
> His ship was down borne, himself there to die;
> The king's seal was lost, with other gallies tway.
> Lady Joanna she the Lord Jesu besought,
> In Cyprus she might be to haven quickly brought:
> The maiden Berengare, she was sore afright,
> That neither far nor near, her king rode in sight."

Queen Joanna was alarmed for herself, but the maiden Berengaria only thought of Richard's safety. Bernard, the treasurer, does not allow that Joanna was quite so much frightened. We translate his words: "Queen Joanna's galley sheltered in the harbour of Limoussa, when Isaac, the lord of Cyprus, sent two boats, and demanded if the queen would land? She declined the offer, saying, 'All she wanted was, to know whether the king of England had passed?' They replied, 'They did not know.' At that juncture Isaac approached with a great power; upon which the chevaliers who guarded the royal ladies got the galley in order, to be rowed out of the harbour at the first indication of hostility. Meantime Isaac, who saw Berengaria on board, demanded 'What damsel that was with them?' They declared, 'She was the sister of the king of Navarre, whom the king of England's mother had brought for him to espouse.' Isaac seemed so angry at this intelligence, that Stephen de Turnham gave signal to heave up the anchor, and the queen's galley rowed with all speed into the offing."[1]

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[1] Fiend means 'enemy' in German, and doubtless in Anglo-Saxon.

When the gale had somewhat abated, king Richard, after mustering his navy, found not only that the ship was missing wherein were drowned both the chancellor of England and the great seal, but the galley that bore the precious freight of his sister and his bride. He immediately sailed from a friendly Cretan harbour in search of his lost ships. When arrived off Cyprus, he entered the bay of Famagusta, and beheld the galley that contained his princesses labouring heavily and tossing in the offing. He became infuriated with the thought that some wrong had been offered to them, and leaped, armed as he was, into the first boat that could be prepared. His anger increased on learning that the queen's galley had put into the harbour in the storm, but had been driven inhospitably from shelter by the threats of the Greek despot.[2]

At the time of Richard's landing, Isaac and all his islanders were busily employed in plundering the wreck of the chancellor's ship and two English transports, then stranded on the Cypriot shore. As this self-styled emperor, though in behaviour worse than a pagan, professed to be a Christian, Richard, at his first landing, sent him a civil message, suggesting the propriety of leaving off plundering his wrecks. To this Isaac returned an impertinent answer, saying, "That whatever goods the sea threw on his island he should take, without asking leave of any one."

"'They shall be bought full dear, by Jesu, heaven's king!"

With this saying, Richard, battle-axe in hand, led his crusaders so boldly to the rescue, that the mock emperor and his Cypriots scampered into Limoussa, the capital of the island, much faster than they had left it. Freed from the presence of the inhospitable despot, king Richard made signals for Joanna's galley to enter the harbour. Berengaria, half dead with fatigue and terror, was welcomed on shore by the conquering king, when, says the chronicler, "there was joy and love enow."

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[1] Guizot's edition of Bernard le Trésorier.

[2] Vinisauf and Piers Langtoft. 'Despot' was a title given to the petty Greek potentates.

As soon as Isaac Comnenus was safe behind the walls of his citadel, he sent a message to request a conference with king Richard, who expected that he had a little lowered the despot's pride; but when they met, Isaac was so full of vapouring and boasting, that he elicited from his illustrious auditor an aside in English; and as Cœur de Lion then uttered the only words in our language he ever was known to speak, it is well they have been recorded by chronicle:—"Ha, de debil!" exclaimed king Richard; "he speke like a fole Breton."[1]

As Isaac and Richard could not come to any terms of pacification, the despot retreated to a stronghold in a neighbouring mountain: while Richard, after making a speech to the Londoners, (we hope in more choice English than the above,) instigating them to the storm of the Cypriot capital with promise of plunder, led them on to the attack, axe in hand. The Londoners easily captured Limoussa.

Directly the coast was clear of Isaac and his myrmidons, magnificent preparations were made at Limoussa for the nuptials and coronation of king Richard and Berengaria. We are able to describe the appearance made by these royal personages at this high solemnity. King Richard's costume, we may suppose, varied little from that in which he gave audience to the despot Isaac a day after the marriage had taken place.[2] "A satin tunic of rose-colour was belted round his waist; his mantle was of striped silver tissue, brocaded with silver half-moons; his sword, of fine Damascus steel, had a hilt of gold, and a silver-scaled sheath: on his head he wore a scarlet bonnet, brocaded in gold with figures of animals. He bore a truncheon in his hand. His Spanish steed was led before him, saddled and bitted with gold, and the saddle was inlaid with precious stones; two little golden lions were fixed on it, in the place of a crupper: they were figured with their paws raised, in act to strike each other. In this attire," Vinisauf adds, "Richard, who had yellow curls, a bright complexion, and a figure like Mars himself, appeared a perfect model of military and manly grace."

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[1] Piers of Langtoft. This speech implied no offence to the English, but was meant as a reproach to the Bretons, who are to this day proverbial in France for their wilfulness. Besides, Richard was bitter against the Bretons, who deprived him of the society of his then acknowledged heir, Arthur, their young duke.—Vinisauf.

[2] Vinisauf.

The effigy of queen Berengaria, at Espan, certainly presents her as a bride,—a circumstance which is ascertained by the flowing tresses, royal matrons always wearing their hair covered, or else closely braided. Her hair is parted, *à la vierge,* on the brow; a transparent veil, open on each side like the Spanish mantillas, hangs behind, and covers the rich tresses at their length: the veil is confined by a regal diadem, of peculiar splendour, studded with several bands of gems, and surmounted by fleurs-de-lis, to which so much foliage is added as to give it the appearance of a double crown,—perhaps because she was crowned queen of Cyprus as well as England. Our antiquaries affirm, that the peculiar character of Berengaria's elegant but singular style of beauty brings conviction to every one who looks on her effigy, that it is a carefully finished portrait.[1]

At his marriage, king Richard proclaimed a grand feast.

> "To Limoussa the lady was led, his feast the king did cry,
> Berengere will be wed, and sojourn thereby,
> The third day of the feast, bishop Bernard of Bayonne
> Renewed oft the geste, to the queen he gave the crown."[2]

"And there, in the joyous month of May, 1191," says an ancient writer, "in the flourishing and spacious isle of Cyprus, celebrated as the very abode of the goddess of love, did king Richard solemnly take to wife his beloved lady Berengaria." By the consent of the Cypriots, wearied of Isaac's tyranny, and by the advice of the allied crusaders who came to assist at his nuptials, Richard was crowned king of Cyprus, and his bride, queen of England and Cyprus.

Soon after, the fair heiress of Cyprus, daughter to the despot Isaac, came and threw herself at the feet of Richard. "Lord king," she said, "have mercy on me!" when the king courteously put forth his hand to lift her from the ground, and sent her to his wife and his sister Joanna. As many historical scandals are afloat respecting the Cypriot princess, implying that Richard, captivated by the distressed beauty, from that moment forsook his queen, it is well to observe the words of an eye-witness,[1] who declares "that Richard sent the lady directly to his queen, from whom she never parted till after their return to Europe." The surrender of the Cypriot princess was followed by the capture of her father, whom the king of England bound in silver chains, richly gilt, and presented to queen Berengaria as her captive.[2]

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[1] See portrait.

[2] May 12th: Howe's Chronicle, p. 194.

After the conclusion of the nuptials and coronation of Berengaria, her royal bridegroom once more hoisted his flag on his good galley Trenc-the-mere, and set sail, in beautiful summer weather, for Palestine. Berengaria and her sister-in-law again embarked under the protection of sir Stephen de Turnham, such escort being safer than companionship with the warlike Richard.[3] Their galley made the port of Acre before the Trenc-the-mere. "On their arrival at Acre, though," says Bernard le Trésorier, "it was very grievous to the king of France to know that Richard was married to any other than his sister; yet he received Berengaria with great courtesy, taking her in his arms, and lifting her on shore himself from the boat to the beach." Richard appeared before Acre on the long bright day of St. Barnabas, when the whole allied army, elated by the naval victory he had won by the way, marched to the beach to welcome their champion. "The earth shook with footsteps of the Christians, and the sound of their shouts."

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[1] The Provençal metrical historian, who is the guide of Piers of Langtoft.

[2] Isaac afterwards entered among the Templars, and died in their order. Richard presented his island to Guy de Lusignan, his friend, as a compensation for the loss of Jerusalem. This dethronement of Isaac and the captivity of his daughter was the origin of Richard's imprisonment in Germany, as we shall presently see.

[3] The king's arrival was delayed by a naval battle with a rich Saracen argosy, which he captured with great plunder. The manœuvres of the Trenc-the-mere are thus described by the Provençal; likewise the casting of the Greek fire:—

"The king's own galley, he called it Trenc-the-mere;
It was first under weigh, and came that ship full near,
Who threw her buckets out. The galley to her drew,
The king stood full stout, and many of them slew,
Though wild fire they cast."

When Acre was taken, Richard established his queen and sister safely there. They remained at Acre with the Cypriot princess during the whole of the Syrian campaign, under the care of Richard's castellans, Bertrand de Verdun and Stephen de Munchenis. To the left of the mosque at Acre are the ruins of a palace, called to this day 'king Richard's palace:'[1] this was doubtless the abode of Berengaria. There is not a more pleasant spot in history than the tender friendship of Berengaria and Joanna, who formed an attachment amidst the perils and terrors of storm and siege, ending only with their lives.[2] How quaintly, yet expressively, is their gentle and feminine love for each other marked by the sweet simplicity of the words,—

"They held each other dear,
And lived as doves in cage!"

noting, at the same time, the harem-like seclusion in which the royal ladies dwelt while sharing the crusade campaign. It was from the citadel of Acre that Richard tore down the banner of Leopold archduke of Austria, who, by alliance with the family of the Comneni, was related to the Cypriot lady. Her captivity was the real matter of dispute, as the scandals which connected her name with that of king Richard seemed to touch the honour of the house of Austria.

We have little space to dwell on Richard's deeds of romantic valour in Palestine, on the capture of Ascalon, or the battle of Jaffa, before which city was killed Richard's good steed, named Fanuelle, whose feats in battle are nearly as much celebrated by the troubadours as those of his master.[3] After the death of Fanuelle, Richard was obliged to fight on foot.

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[1] Dr. Clarke's Travels. The tradition is that Richard built the palace; but he had no time for any such work. The architecture is Saracenic, and it was doubtless a palace of the resident emir of Acre.

[2] Madame Cottin, in her celebrated but florid romance of Mathilde, has some faint idea that a sister of Richard's shared his crusade with Berengaria; but neither that lady nor sir Walter Scott seem aware which princess of England was the person.

[3] By some called Favelle, probably Flavel, meaning *yellow-coloured*. Vinisauf declares this peerless charger was taken among the spoils of Cyprus, with another named Lyard. The cavaliers in ancient times named their steeds from their colour, as *Bayard*, bay-colour; *Lyard*, grey; *Ferraunt*, black as iron; *Flavel*, yellow, or very light sorrel.

The courteous Saladin, who saw him thus battling, was shocked that so accomplished a cavalier should be dismounted, and sent him, as a present, a magnificent Arab charger. Richard had the precaution to order one of his knights to mount the charger first. The headstrong beast no sooner found a stranger on his back, than he took the bit between his teeth, and, refusing all control, galloped back to his own quarters, carrying the Christian knight into the midst of Saladin's camp. If king Richard had ridden the wilful animal, he would, in like manner, have been at the mercy of the Saracens. Saladin was so much ashamed of the misbehaviour of his present, that he could scarcely look up while he apologized to the Christian knight, for it appeared as if he had laid a trap for the liberty of king Richard. He sent back the knight mounted on a more manageable steed, on which Richard rode to the end of the campaign.[1]

King Richard, during his Syrian campaign, was once within sight of Jerusalem, but never took it. While his queen Berengaria sojourned at Acre, an incident befell him, of which De Joinville, the companion in arms of St. Louis, has thus preserved the memory:—"In those times, when Hugh duke of Burgundy[2] and king Richard of England were abiding at Acre, they received intelligence that they might take Jerusalem if they chose, for its garrison had gone to the assistance of Damascus. They accordingly marched towards the holy city, the English king's battalions leading the way, while Burgundy's force brought up the rear. But when Richard drew near to Jerusalem, intelligence was brought him that the duke of Burgundy had turned back with his division, out of pure envy, that it might not be said that the king of England had taken Jerusalem. As these tidings were being discussed, one of the English knights cried out,—'Sire, sire! only come hither, and I will show you Jerusalem.' But the king, throwing down his weapons, said, with tears in his eyes and hands uplifted to heaven,—'Ah, Lord God! I pray thee that I may never see thy holy city Jerusalem since things thus happen, and since I cannot deliver it from the hands of thine enemies!" Richard could do nothing more than return to his queen and sister at Acre.

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[1] Chronicle of Bernard le Trésorier.

[2] Philip Augustus and the duke of Austria decamped from the crusade at Cesarea. Hugh of Burgundy commanded the remnant of the French forces.

"You must know that this king Richard performed such deeds of prowess when he was in the Holy Land, that the Saracens, on seeing their horses frightened at a shadow or a bush, cried out to them, 'What! dost think Melec-Ric is there?' This they were accustomed to say from the many times he had vanquished them. In like manner, when the children of Turks or Saracens cried, their mothers said to them, 'Hush, hush! or I will give you to king Richard;' and from the terror of these words the babes were instantly quiet.'[1] The final truce between Richard and Saladin was concluded in a fair flowery meadow[2] near Mount Tabor, where Richard was so much charmed with the gallant bearing of the 'prince of Miscreants,' as Saladin is civilly termed in the crusading treaties, that he declared he would rather be the friend of that brave and honest pagan, than the ally of the crafty Philip or the brutal Leopold. It is a tradition, often cited in modern romance, but without historical foundation, that Richard offered the hand of his sister, queen Joanna, to Saladin's brother, Melec Adhel.

The autumn of 1192 had commenced when king Richard concluded his peace with Saladin, and prepared to return, covered with fruitless glory, to his native dominions. A mysterious estrangement had, at this time, taken place between him and Berengaria; yet the chroniclers do not mention that any rival had supplanted the queen, but merely that accidents of war had divided him from her company. As for the Cypriot princess, if he were estranged from his queen, he must likewise have been separated from the fair captive, since she always remained with Berengaria. The king bade farewell to his queen and sister, and saw them embark the very evening of his own departure. The queens, accompanied by the Cypriot princess, sailed from Acre, under the care of Stephen de Turnham, September the 29th. Richard meant to return by a different route across Europe. He travelled in the disguise of a Templar, and embarked in a ship belonging to the master of the Temple. This vessel was wrecked off the coast of Istria, which forced Richard to proceed homewards through the domains of his enemy, Leopold of Austria. To his ignorance of geography is attributed his near approach to Leopold's capital. After several narrow escapes, a page, sent by Richard to purchase provisions at a village near Vienna, was recognised by an officer who had made the late crusade with Leopold. The boy was seized, and, after enduring cruel torments, he confessed where he had left his master.

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[1] Joinville's words are thus paraphrased by Dryden:—

"No more Sebastian's formidable name
Is longer used to still the crying babe."

[2] Piers Langtoft.

When Leopold received certain intelligence where Richard harboured, the inn was searched, but not a soul found there who bore any appearance of a king. "No," said the host, "there is no one here like him whom you seek, without he be the Templar in the kitchen, now turning the fowls which are roasting for dinner." The officers of Leopold took the hint and went into the kitchen, where, in fact, was seated a Templar very busy turning the spit. The Austrian chevalier, who had served in the crusade, knew him, and said quickly, "There he is: seize him!" Cœur de Lion started from the spit, and did battle for his liberty right valiantly, but was overborne by numbers.[1] The revengeful Leopold immediately imprisoned his gallant enemy, and immured him so closely in a Styrian castle called Tenebreuse, that for months no one knew whether the lion-hearted king was alive or dead. Richard, whose heroic name was the theme of admiration in Europe, and the burden of every song, seemed vanished from the face of the earth.

Better fortune attended the vessel that bore the fair freight of the three royal ladies. Stephen de Turnham's galley arrived without accident at Naples, where Berengaria, Joanna, and the Cypriot princess landed safely, and, under the care of sir Stephen, journeyed to Rome. The Provençal traditions declare, that here Berengaria first took the alarm that some disaster had happened to her lord, from seeing a belt of jewels offered for sale which she knew had been on his person when she parted from him. At Rome she likewise heard some vague reports of his shipwreck, and of the enmity of the emperor Henry VI.[1]

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[1] Translated from Bernard le Trésorier.—Guizot's Chronicles.

Berengaria was detained at Rome, with the princesses her companions, by her fear of the emperor, for upwards of half a year. At length the pope, moved by her distress and earnest entreaties, sent them, under the care of messire Mellar, one of the cardinals, to Pisa, whence they proceeded to Genoa, where they took shipping to Marseilles. "At Marseilles Berengaria was met by her friend and kinsman the king of Arragon, who showed the royal ladies every mark of reverence, gave them safe-conduct through his Provençal domains, and sent them on, under the escort of the count de Sancto Egidio." This Egidio is doubtless the crusader Raymond count St. Gilles, who, travelling from Rome with a strong escort, offered his protection to the distressed queens of England and Sicily; and though his father, the count of Thoulouse, had during Richard's crusade invaded Guienne, and drawn on himself a severe chastisement from Berengaria's faithful brother, Sancho the Strong, yet the young count so well acquitted himself of his charge, that he won the affections of the fair widow, queen Joanna, on the journey.[2] The attachment of these lovers healed the enmity that had long subsisted between the house of Aquitaine and that of the counts of Thoulouse, on account of the superior claims of queen Eleanora on that great fief. When Eleanora found the love that subsisted between her youngest child and the heir of Thoulouse, she conciliated his father by giving up her rights to her daughter, and Berengaria had the satisfaction of seeing her two friends united after she arrived at Poitou.[3]

Now queen Berengaria is left safely in her own dominions, it is time to return to her unfortunate lord, who seems to have been destined, by the malice of Leopold, to a life-long incarceration. The royal prisoner almost despaired of liberty when he wrote that pathetic passage in his well-known Provençal *tenson*, saying, "Now know I for a certainty that there exists for me neither friend nor parent; or, for the lack of gold and silver, I should not so long remain a prisoner." He scarcely did justice to his affectionate mother, who, directly she learned his captivity, never ceased exerting herself for his release. Without giving any credence to the ballad story of king Richard and the lion's heart, which solely seems to have arisen from a metaphorical epithet of the troubadour Peyrols,[1] and is not even alluded to by the most imaginative of contemporary chroniclers, it really appears that Richard was ill-treated during his German captivity. Matthew Paris declares he was thrown into a dungeon from whence no other man ever escaped with life, and was loaded with irons; yet his countenance was ever serene, and his conversation pleasant and facetious with the crowds of armed guards, who were stationed at his dungeon-door day and night. It was a long time before Richard's friends could with any certainty make out his locality. He was utterly lost for some months. Blondel, a troubadour knight and poet, who had been shipwrecked with him on the coast of Istria, and who had sought him through the cities of southern Germany, sang, beneath the tower Tenebreuse, in which he was confined, a *tenson* which Richard and he had composed together. Scarcely had he finished the first stanza,[2] when Richard replied with the second. Blondel directly went to queen Eleanora, and gave her tidings of the existence of her son, and she took measures for his release.

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[1] Hoveden's Chronicle.

[2] Roger Hoveden, fol. 447.

[3] Piers of Langtoft says that king Richard betrothed his sister to the heroic crusader St. Gilles, in Palestine; an assertion contradicted by the enmity sub sisting between the count, his father, and himself.

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[1] In the beautiful crusade *sirvente* extant by Peyrols, he calls the king "lion-hearted Richard." Peyrols was his fellow-soldier.—Sismondi. The earliest chronicler who mentions the lion-legend is Rastall, the brother-in-law of sir Thomas More, who had no better means of knowing the truth than we have. Here are his quaint sayings on the subject: "It is said that a lyon was put to king Richard, being in prison, to have devoured him; and when the lyon was gaping, he put his arm in his mouth and *pulled the lyon by the heart so hard*, that he slew the lyon, and therefore is called Cœur de Lyon; while others say he is called Cœur de Lyon because of his boldness and hardy stomach."

[2] Blondel's *tenson* is not preserved, but the poem Richard composed is still in the Bibliothèque Royale. There is no just reason for doubting this Provençal tradition of Blondel's agency in the discovery of Richard. Crescembini and most foreign historians authenticate it. The Penny Cyclopædia (not very favourable to romance) looks on it as we do. In fact, it is consistent with the manners and customs of the era.

The letters which Eleanora of Aquitaine addressed to pope Celestine on the subject of her son's captivity, were penned by the royal secretary, Peter of Blois.[1] Whether the composition emanated from Peter, or from his royal lady, is another question. There are many passages alluding with passionate penitence to her own former criminality, which no courtier dared to have indited; on the other hand, the numerous scriptural narratives and analogies indicate the ecclesiastic, while a tincture of pedantry, to say nothing of punning, speaks strongly of the professional scribe. The letters are written in Latin, but that language presented few difficulties to Eleanora, who could compose in Provençal, a dialect far more Latinized than French: likewise, she had been accustomed to the daily service of the church. The tenour of the epistles, the strain of self-condemnation, and the agonized maternity that runs through them, give the idea that they were written from her lips, or transcribed from passages which she had noted down. What scribe, for instance, would have presumed thus to express himself?—

> "O Mother of mercy! look upon a wretched mother. If thy son, the fount of mercy, avenges the sins of the mother on the son, let him launch his vengeance on her who has sinned; let him punish me, the guilty, and not let his wrath diverge on my unoffending son. Me, miserable yet unpitied as I am! why have I, the queen of two kingdoms, survived to endure the wretchedness of calamitous old age? . . . . . .
>
> "The young king and the count of Bretagne sleep in the dust, while their hapless mother lives on, tortured with the remembrance of the dead. Two sons were left for my consolation, but now they only survive for my sorrow, condemned and miserable wretch that I am! Richard the king is in chains, while John wastes and devastates his captive brother's realm with fire and sword. The Lord's hand is heavy upon me: truly his anger fights against me when my sons strive together, if that may be called a strife where one person languishes in prison, and his opponent, oh, grief of griefs! lawlessly usurps the unfortunate one's dominions."

The queen-mother here alludes to the strife raised by prince John He had obtained his brother's leave to abide in England, on condition that he submitted to the government established there. Queen Eleanora had intended to fix her residence at Rouen, as a central situation between her own dominions and those of king Richard. But the confused state of affairs in England summoned her thither, February 11, 1192. She found John in open rebellion; for, stimulated by messages from Philip Augustus, offering him all Richard's continental provinces, and the hand of Alice, rejected by Richard, he aimed at nothing less than the English crown. The arrival of his mother curbed his turbulence: she told him to touch his brother's rights under peril of her curse; she forbade his disgraceful intention of allying himself with Alice; and, to render such mischievous project impossible, she left that princess in close confinement at Rouen, instead of delivering her to Philip Augustus, as king Richard had agreed,—so little truth is there in the common assertion that the worthless character of John might be attributed to the encouragement his vices received from his mother; but it was the doting affection of Henry II. for his youngest son that had this effect, as he was the child of his old age, and constantly near him, while the queen was kept in confinement at a distance from her family.

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[1] Letters of Peter of Blois, edited by Du Chesne.—Bib. du Roi, Paris.

To proceed with Eleanora's letter. Her agonizing exclamations and self-reproaches are diversified by the scribe Peter with interpolations from Job and Jeremiah, and the penitential Psalms; yet an earnest vein of personality runs through the epistle, which is in many passages imbued with historical truth. Eleanora, when meditating on a journey to visit, or rather to search for, the prison of her son, thus expresses herself:—

> "If I leave my son's dominions, invaded as they are on every side with enemies, they will, on my departure, lose all counsel and solace: if I remain, I shall not behold my son, whose face I long to see. There will be none to labour for his redemption, and, what I fear the most, he will be goaded for an exorbitant ransom; and unused as his generous youth is to such terrible calamities, he will not survive all he has to endure."[1]

This remarkable letter, then, seems to enter into a strain of reproach against the pope, which has caused some surprise to those who are not imbued with the peculiar spirit of that age; but the object of Eleanora is clearly to excite the pope into asserting his spiritual power against the usurpations of the emperor and the house of Austria,—in short, the same quarrel which is as undecided in the nineteenth century as it was in 1192.

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[1] Letters of Peter of Blois, edited by Du Chesne.—Bib. du Roi, Paris.

Eleanora invokes the thunders of the German pope Celestine against the German encroacher, and strives to pique him into becoming the advocate of her son :—

> "Yet the prince of the apostles still fills the apostolic chair, and his judgment-seat is a place of resort; wherefore it remains that you, O holy father! draw against these injurious ones the sword of Peter, which is for this purpose set over people and kingdoms; for the cross of Christ excels the eagles of Cæsar, the sword of Peter the weapon of Constantine, the apostolic see is above the imperial power.[1] . . . . . .
>
> "Wherefore, then, do you leave my son in bonds, delaying negligently? or rather, is it that you dare not free him? . . . . Woe for us when the shepherd dreads the wolf! leaving not only the lambs, but the elect leader[2] of the flock in the bloody fangs of the beast of prey."

After passionately reproaching Celestine for his abstinence from the thunders of excommunication, from interdicts, terrible sentences, and the whole arsenal of spiritual warfare, she reminds him of his promise "thrice to send legates, which never were sent,"—and here the genius of the age availed itself of a pun, which conceit must be attributed to Peter of Blois rather than to the agonized mother, for she was too much in earnest to play on the sound of Latin words, and say "that his messengers were tied, rather than speeded forward;" in short, that they were men in ligatures, rather than legates.

> "If my son were prosperous, they would hasten at his summons, because they would expect bountiful largess from his generosity and the great revenues of his dominions. . . . . Is this the promise you made me at the castle of Radulfi,[3] with such protestations of aid and kindness? What availed it to feed my simplicity with mere words?"

The passionate penitence of Eleanora broke forth in the following exclamations, which, it will be allowed, were no flowers of her scribe's rhetoric :—

> "Oh, Lord! to thee are the eyes of thy servant lifted up,—to thee: thou lookest on my grief. Lord of lords, and King of kings! consider the cause of thine Anointed; assert the empire of thine own Son, and at the same time save the son of thine handmaid. Visit not on him the crimes of his father, or the iniquities of his mother!"

Again Eleanora struggles to awake the jealousy of the pope, whom she suspects of Ghibiline tendencies or German partiality, by representing the cruelty of the emperor Henry to churchmen. She accuses him of the assassination of the bishop of Liege, and of the imprisonment of several German and Italian prelates; also of taking possession of Sicily, which, since the time of Constantine, had ever been the patrimony of St. Peter:—

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[1] Ibid. These are all axioms and sayings of the Guelphic party.

[2] Richard, she thus reminds pope Celestine, was elected head of the crusade.

[3] It will be remembered that Eleanora, on her voyage home from Messina, visited the pope, to adjust some disputes concerning the archbishopric of York.

> "We feel evil: we dread more," concludes the queen. "I am no prophetess, nor even a prophet's daughter; yet my sorrow foresees greater troubles for the future! That sorrow chokes the words I would utter: sobs impede my breath, and close up the vocal utterance which would further express the thoughts of my soul! Farewell."

By the abruptness of the conclusion, it is by no means improbable that the passion of grief, which had been excited by many passages in this letter, actually prevented the queen from further dictation to Peter of Blois, who availed himself of a circumstance, at once natural and interesting, for the conclusion of his transcript. Those who read the whole of the epistle will not wonder that a churchman, writing such an epistle to the head of his church, should shrink from adding one line, even the usual formula of conclusion, on his own responsibility.

Throughout the whole of this exordium, historians can perceive that Eleanora, or her scribe, endeavours to put in strong antagonism the disputes then in their utmost virulence between the Guelphs and Ghibilines, or the party of the church, or Italy, against the emperor of Germany. She accuses the pope of politically temporizing with the might of Germany, and strives to pique him into the assertion of his spiritual power in behalf of her Richard, who was by alliance as well as principle an undoubted Guelphite,[1] or supporter of the church against all temporal despotism,—excepting his own.

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[1] The office of the princes of the house of Guelph, the most civilized and heroic among the German potentates, was to defend, by their occupation of southern Germany, Italy, and the city of the pontiff, against the incursions of the barbarian Germans. When the German empire became Christian, the warlike Guelphs did not lose their party: they defended the spiritual independence of the pope against the temporal power of the empire,—a quarrel, although carried on by other champions, not quite decided at the present day. The explanation of the party terms, Guelph and its antithesis Ghibiline, is thus very simple; but without such comprehension, Eleanora's reproaches of the pope seem without aim or meaning,—nay, common sense would lead the reader to suppose that the queen, by her scornful abuse, must have made an irreconcilable enemy of the pope. Eleanora, however, well knew her tactics: she knew that pope Celestine dared not be identified with the Ghibiline or Germanic party against the freedom of the church.

Queen Eleanora summoned her favourite grandson, Otho of Guelph, the representative of that heroic line, and withal her deputy in Aquitaine, to the aid of his uncle Richard; and he hastened, nothing loath, to the German congress, that he might give Cœur de Lion the aid of his formidable name, and the sanction of his great office as hereditary guardian of the liberties of the church.

When queen Eleanora and the chief justiciary ascertained the place in which Richard was detained, they sent two abbots to confer with him in Germany. They met him, with his guards, on the road to Worms, where a diet of the empire was soon to be held, and were received by him with his usual spirit and animation. He inquired into the state of his friends, his subjects, and his dominions, and particularly after the health of the king of Scotland, on whose honour, he said, he entirely relied; and certainly he was not deceived in his judgment of the character of that hero. On hearing of the base conduct of his brother John, he was shocked and looked grave; but presently recovering his cheerfulness, he said, with a smile, "My brother John was never made for conquering kingdoms!"[1] Richard defended himself before the diet with eloquence and pathos that drew tears from most of his hearers; and the mediation of the princes of the empire induced the emperor to accept, as ransom, one hundred thousand marks of silver.

Meantime the ransom was collected in England, Normandy, and Aquitaine, to which queen Eleanora largely contributed. She again received a tithe of queen-gold to a large amount. She had taken one hundred marks out of every thousand raised for her son's marriage, and now she claimed the tenth of his ransom, although she certainly gave it, with much more, as her contribution towards his freedom. The monks of Bury, having obtained the restoration of their gold cup through her generosity, resolved to act the same part again, for they were amerced in the enormous sum of a thousand marks as their quota for Richard's ransom. As they had no money, they sent in the whole of their church plate in payment. Again it is recorded that Eleanora, the queen-regent, was personally superintending the registration of the money and valuables that came into the treasury of her son. "Now," pursues the Bury chronicler, "it was queen Eleanora's right, by the law of the land, to receive a hundred marks whensoever the king is paid a thousand. So she took up this gold cup and gave it back to us once more, for the benefit of the soul of her dear lord, king Henry II."[1] The adventures of this gold cup (which are not yet concluded) offer the most practical illustration of the nature of the claims of the queens of England on the *aurum reginæ* yet discovered.

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[1] Hoveden.

When the first instalment of king Richard's ransom was ready, his affectionate mother and the chief justiciary set out for Germany, a little before Christmas. She was accompanied by her grand-daughter Eleanora, surnamed 'the Pearl of Brittany.' This young princess was promised, by the ransom-treaty, in marriage to the heir of Leopold of Austria.[2] The Cypriot princess was likewise taken from the keeping of queen Berengaria, on the demand of the emperor, and escorted by queen Eleanora to the German congress, where she was surrendered to her Austrian relatives.

It was owing to the exertions of the gallant Guelphic princes, his relations, that the actual liberation of Cœur de Lion was at last effected. Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony,[3] and his sons, appeared before the diet, and pleaded the cause of the English hero with the most passionate eloquence; they pledged their credit for the payment of the remainder of his ransom, and actually left William of Winchester, the youngest Guelphic prince, in pawn with the emperor for the rest of the ransom. After an absence of four years, three months, and nine days, king Richard landed at Sandwich, in April, the Sunday after St. George's-day, in company with his royal mother, who had the pleasure of surrendering to him his dominions, both insular and continental, without diminution.

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[1] Chronicle of Josceline de Brakelonde.

[2] The marriage-contract was afterwards broken.

[3] Her majesty queen Victoria is the representative of this great and generous prince; and at the same time, from his wife Matilda, eldest daughter of Henry II., derives a second direct descent from the house of Plantagenet.

Eleanora's detention of the princess Alice in Normandy had drawn on that country a fierce invasion from Philip Augustus, the result of which would have been doubtful if the tears of Berengaria, then newly arrived in Aquitaine, had not prevailed on her noble brother, Sancho the Strong, to traverse France with two hundred choice knights. By the valour of this hero, and his chivalric reinforcement, Normandy was delivered from the king of France.[1] Berengaria, during the imprisonment of her royal husband, lost her father, Sancho the Wise, king of Navarre, who died in 1194,[2] after a glorious reign of forty-four years.

After a second coronation, Richard went in progress throughout England, with his royal mother, to sit in judgment on those castellans who had betrayed their fortresses to his brother John: by the advice of his mother they were treated with much lenity. At all these councils queen Eleanora assisted him, being regarded with the utmost reverence, and sitting in state at his right hand. Probably in the same progress, king Richard sold the manor of Mildenhall to the monks of Bury St. Edmund's. Queen Eleanora made a claim of her *aurum reginæ*, or queen-gold, on the sum paid to her son. Once more the wily ecclesiastics, knowing the good service the gold cup of Henry II. had done for them, sent it in as part of payment, protesting their utter inability otherwise to make up the price. Queen Eleanora was present, for the purpose of asserting her claim on the tenth of the gold; but when she saw, for the third time, her old acquaintance the gold cup, she was somewhat disturbed in spirit, deeming that her generosity was played upon. It is true she redeemed the gift of her husband, but she required from the monks of Bury a solemn promise "that, for the time to come, the gold cup of Henry II. should be held sacred, and never again be set for sale or laid in pledge."[3]

When the king, in the course of his progress, arrived in Normandy, queen Eleanora introduced into his chamber prince John, who knelt at his royal brother's feet for pardon. Richard raised him, with this magnanimous expression: "I forgive

[1] Tyrrell.

[2] History of Navarre.

[3] Josceline de Brakelonda.

you, John; and I wish I could as easily forget your offence, as you will my pardon."

King Richard finished his progress by residing some months in his Angevin territories. Although he was in the vicinity of the loving and faithful Berengaria, he did not return to her society. The reason of this estrangement was, that the king had renewed his connexion with a number of profligate and worthless associates, the companions of his long bachelorhood in his father's lifetime. His conduct at this time scandalized all his subjects, as he abandoned himself to habitual inebriety and degrading vices; for which various virtuous churchmen reproved him boldly, to their credit be it spoken. "The spring of 1195, Richard was hunting in one of his Norman forests,[1] when he was met by a hermit, who recognised him, and preached him a very eloquent sermon on his irregular life, finishing by prophesying that, unless he repented, his end and punishment were close at hand. The king answered slightingly, and went his way; but the Easter following he was seized with a most severe illness, which threatened to be fatal, when he remembered the saying of the hermit-prophet and, greatly alarmed, began to repent of his sins." Richard sent for all the monks within ten miles round, and made public confession of his iniquities, vowing, withal, that if queen Berengaria would forgive him, he would send for her, and never forsake her again. When he recovered, these good resolutions were strengthened by an interview he had with an English bishop.

When Richard first parted from the queen, he quarrelled with the virtuous St. Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, on the old ground of exacting a simoniacal tribute on the installation of the prelate into his see. Willing to evade the direct charge of selling the see, king Richard intimated that a present of a fur-mantle, worth a thousand marks, might be the composition. St. Hugh said he was no judge of such gauds, and therefore sent the king a thousand marks, declaring, if he would devour the revenue devoted to the poor, he must have his wilful way. Richard pocketed the money, but some time after sent for the fur-mantle. St. Hugh set out for Normandy, to remonstrate with the king on this double extortion. His friends anticipated that he would be killed; but St. Hugh said, "I fear him not," and boldly entered the chapel where Richard was at mass, when the following scene took place. "Give me the embrace of peace, my son," said St. Hugh. "That you have not deserved," replied the king. "Indeed I have," said St. Hugh, "for I have made a long journey on purpose to see my son." So saying, he took hold of the king's sleeve, and drew him on one side. Richard smiled, and embraced the old man. They withdrew to the recess behind the altar, and sat down. "In what state is your conscience?" asked the bishop. "Very easy," answered the king. "How can that be, my son," said the bishop, "when you live apart from your virtuous queen, and are faithless to her? when you devour the provision of the poor, and load your people with heavy exactions? Are these light transgressions, my son?" The king owned his faults, and promised amendment; and when he related this conversation to his courtiers, he added,—"Were all our prelates like Hugh of Lincoln, both king and barons must submit to their righteous rebukes!"[1] Whether the interview with St. Hugh took place before or after the king's alarming illness, we have no data to declare; but as Richard was evidently in a tamer state when St. Hugh visited him than when he lawlessly demanded the fur-mantle, we think the good bishop must have arrived opportunely, just as Richard was beginning to forget his sick-bed vows, without quite relapsing into his original recklessness.

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[1] Tyrrell, from a chronicle by Rigord. Maître Rigord was originally a medical man; he was the contemporary of king Richard and king John. His chronicle is, we think, among those edited by Guizot.

The final restoration of Berengaria to the affections of her royal husband took place a few months after, when Richard proceeded to Poictiers,[2] where he was reconciled to his queen, and kept Christmas and the new year of 1196 in that city, with princely state and hospitality. It was a year of great scarcity and famine, and the beneficent queen exerted her restored influence over the heart of the king, by persuading him to give all his superfluous money in bountiful alms to the poor, and through her goodness many were kept from perishing. From that time queen Berengaria and king Richard were never parted. She found it best to accompany him in all his campaigns, and we find her with him at the hour of his death. Higden, in the Polychronicon, gives this testimony to the love that Berengaria bore to Richard: "The king took home to him his queen Berengaria, whose society he had for a long time neglected, though she were a royal, eloquent, and beauteous lady, and for his love had ventured with him through the world."

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[1] Berrington.

[2] Rigord, French Chron.

The same year the king, despairing of heirs by his consort, sent for young Arthur, duke of Bretagne, that the boy might be educated at his court as future king of England. His mother Constance, out of enmity to queen Eleanora, unwisely refused this request, and she finished her folly by declaring for the king of France, then waging a fierce war against Richard. This step cost her hapless child his inheritance, and finally his life. From this time Richard acknowledged his brother John as his heir. The remaining three years of Richard's life were spent in petty provincial wars with the king of France. In one of his treaties the princess Alice was at last surrendered to her brother, who gave her, with a tarnished reputation and the dowry of the county of Ponthieu, in marriage to the count of Aumerle, when she had arrived at her thirty-fifth year.

After the reconciliation between Richard and Berengaria, the royal revenues arising from the tin-mines in Cornwall[1] and Devon, valued at two thousand marks per annum, were confirmed to the queen for her dower. Her continental dower was the whole county of Bigorre, and the city of Mans.

It was the lively imagination of Richard, heated by the splendid fictions of Arabian romance, that hurried him to his end. A report was brought to him that a peasant, ploughing in the fields of Vidomar, lord of Chaluz, in Aquitaine, had struck upon a trap-door, which concealed an enchanted treasure;[2]

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera.

[2] Brompton. Newbury. Hemmingford. Wikes.

going down into a cave, he discovered several golden statues, with vases full of diamonds, all of which had been secured in the castle of Chaluz, for the private use of the sieur de Vidomar. Richard, when he heard this fine tale, sent to Vidomar, demanding, as sovereign of the country, his share of the golden statues. The poor castellan declared that no such treasure had been found; nothing but a pot of Roman coins had been discovered, and those he was welcome to have. As Richard had set his mind upon golden statues and vases of diamonds, and had thriven so well when he demanded the golden furniture from king Tancred, it was not probable he could lower his ideas to the reality stated by the unfortunate lord of Vidomar. Accordingly, he marched to besiege the castle of Chaluz, sending word to Vidomar, either to deliver the statues, or abide the storming of the castle. To this siege queen Berengaria certainly accompanied the king. Here Richard met his death, being pierced from the walls by an arrow from an arbalista, or cross-bow, aimed by the hand of Bertrand de Gordon.[1] It was the unskilfulness of the surgeon, who mangled the king's shoulder in cutting out the arrow, joined to Richard's own wilfulness in neglecting the regimen of his physicians, that caused the mortification of a trifling wound and occasioned the death of a hero, who, to many faults, joined a redeeming generosity that showed itself in his last moments. After enduring great agony from his wound, as he drew near to death the castle of Chaluz was taken. He caused Bertrand de Gordon to be brought before him, and telling him he was dying, asked him whether he had discharged the fatal arrow with the intention of slaying him. "Yes, tyrant," replied Gordon; "for to you I owe the deaths of my father and my brother, and my first wish was to be revenged on you." Notwithstanding the boldness of this avowal, the dying king commanded Gordon to be set at liberty, and it was not his fault that his detestable mercenary general, the Fleming Marcade, caused him to be put to a cruel death.

Richard's death took place April 6th, 1199. His queen unquestionably was with him when he died.[1] She corroborated the testimony that he left his dominions, and two-thirds of his treasures, to his brother John. Richard appears to have borne some personal resemblance to his great uncle William Rufus. Like him, his hair and complexion were warm in colour, and his eyes blue, and fiercely sparkling Like Rufus, his strength was prodigious, but he had the advantage of a tall majestic figure.[2] There are some points of resemblance in character between Richard and his collateral ancestor, though Richard must be considered a more learned and elegant prince, and susceptible, withal, of more frequent impulses of generosity and penitence. They both seemed to have excelled in the same species of wit and lively repartee. At the time of king Richard's death, Matthew Paris declares queen Eleanora, his mother, was governing England, "where," adds that historian, "she was exceedingly respected and beloved."

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[1] We find the name of Gordon among the *sirventes* of Bertrand de Born.

Before the body of Cœur de Lion was committed to the grave, an additional load of anguish assailed the heart of his royal widow, through the calamities that befell Joanna, her friend, and Richard's favourite sister. The same species of persecution that afterwards visited Joanna's son, in the well-known war against the Albigenses, had already been incited against his father. Owing to the secret agitations of the Catholic clergy, the barons of Thoulouse were in arms against their sovereign count Raymond. Queen Joanna, though in a state little consistent with such exertions, flew to arms for the relief of her adored lord.[3] We translate the following mournful passage from Guillaume de Puy-Laurens:—[4]

"Queen Joanna was a woman of great courage, and was highly sensitive to the injuries of her husband. She laid siege to the castle of Casser, but, owing to the treachery of her attendants, her camp was fired: she escaped with difficulty from the burning tents, much scorched and hurt. Unsubdued by this accident, she hastened to lay her wrongs before her beloved brother, king Richard. She found he had just expired as she arrived. The pains of premature child-birth seized her as she heard the dire intelligence, and she sank under the double affliction of mental and corporeal agony. With her last breath she begged to be laid near her brother Richard." To Berengaria the request was made, and the cold remains of the royal brother and sister, the dearest objects of the sorrowing queen's affections, were laid, by her pious care, side by side, in the stately abbey of Fontevraud.[1] The heart of Richard was bequeathed by him to be buried in the cathedral of Rouen, where it has lately been exhumed, in 1842. When the case was unclosed, the lion-heart was found entire, but withered to the consistency of a faded leaf.[2]

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[1] See Hemmingford.

[2] Vinisauf.

[3] Unfortunately, M. Michelet has given good historical proof, not only that queen Joanna was the fourth wife of count Raymond, but that all his other countesses were at that time alive. The low scale of morality on which Michelet places the potentates of the south of France, need not be attributed to any of his prejudices against royalty, because he does better justice to the sovereigns of France at this era. than any other modern French historian for two centuries

[4] Guizot's Chronicles, vol. xv. p. 219.

The deaths of Richard and Joanna were immediately succeeded by that of Berengaria's only sister, Blanche. This princess had been given in marriage by Cœur de Lion to his nephew and friend, the troubadour-prince Thibaut of Champagne. The princess Blanche died the day after the birth of a son, who afterwards was the heir both of Sancho and Berengaria, and finally king of Navarre. Thus, in the course of a few short weeks, was the queen of England bereft of all that were near and dear to her. The world had become a desert to Berengaria before she left it for a life of conventual seclusion.

Queen Berengaria fixed her residence at Mans, where she held a great part of her foreign dower. Here she founded the noble abbey of Espan. Once Berengaria left her widowed retirement, when she met her brother-in-law king John, and his fair young bride, at Chinon, her husband's treasure-city. Here she compounded with the English monarch for the dower she held in England, for two thousand marks per annum, to be paid half-yearly. After being entertained with royal magnificence, and receiving every mark of respect from the English court, the royal widow bade farewell to public splendour, and retired to conventual seclusion, and the practice of constant charity. But no sooner was John firmly fixed on the English throne, than he began to neglect the payment of the dower for which his sister-in-law had compounded; and, in 1206, there appears in the Fœdera a passport for the queen-dowager to come to England for the purpose of conferring with king John There exists no authority whereby we can prove that she arrived in this country;[1] but, in 1207, the pope awarded her half the personal goods of her husband.

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[1] The description of Richard's statue has been given by Miss L. S. Costello in her charming work, entitled The Boccages and the Vines. It coincides well with the descriptions we have given of his person, from his contemporary Vinisauf.

[2] This is from a most interesting description of the exhumation of Richard's heart by Mr. Albert Way, in vol. xxix. Archæologia, p. 210; where may be found a copy of the inscription identifying it as the heart of Richard, and likewise an account of the discovery of a fine portrait-statue, raised by the men of Rouen to the memory of their beloved hero.

The records of 1209 present a most elaborate epistle from pope Innocent, setting forth the wrongs and wants of his dear daughter in Christ, Berengaria, who, he says, had appealed to him "with floods of tears streaming down her cheeks, and with audible cries,"—which we trust were flowers of rhetoric of the pope's secretary. As pope Innocent threatens John with an interdict, it is pretty certain that the wrongs of Berengaria formed a clause in the subsequent excommunication of the felon king. Bale, in his coarse comedy of King Jehan, (of which king John is the very shabby hero,) bestows a liberal portion of reviling on Berengaria, because she was the cause of the papal interdict in that reign; but this abuse is levelled at her under the name of queen Juliana. What connexion there was between the queen of Cœur de Lion and the name of Juliana, is difficult to ascertain, excepting that the cathedral of her city of Mans is dedicated to St. Julian; and when she retired from the world, she might have renounced her mundane appellation, and become the name-daughter of the patron saint of her city. However, Bale, who was an historical antiquary, is certainly correct in the cause of the interdict, which arose from the non-payment of Berengaria's dower. By the theological speeches he puts into the mouth of king John, he seems aware of his studies of Arian, and of the Mahometan tendencies of the princes and nobles of the south of France.

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. i. p. 152. These passports, or safe-conducts, occur very frequently in this collection, for the benefit of persons who never used them.

In 1214, when the excommunication was taken off, there exists a letter from John to "his dear sister, the illustrious Berengaria, praying that the pope's nuncio might arbitrate what was due to her." The next year brings a piteous letter from John, praying that his dearly beloved sister will excuse his delay of payment, seeing the "greatness of his adversity by reason of the wickedness of his magnates and barons," who had invited prince Louis of France to spoil her estates; "but when," says king John, "these clouds that have overcast our serenity shall disperse, and our kingdom be full of joyful tranquillity, then the pecuniary debt owed to our dear sister shall be paid joyfully and thankfully." This precious epistle was penned July 8th, 1216, by John; but he died the succeeding October, and Berengaria's debt was added to the vast sum of his other trespasses, for "joyful tranquillity" never came for him, nor of course her time of payment.

King John being deprived of the duchy of Normandy, Berengaria was forced to petition Philip Augustus, king of France, concerning her rights of dower there: as the widow of his late feudatory, she was given the county of Maine in compensation. A singular circumstance proves that Berengaria exercised sovereignty over this province. In the year 1216 she presided in person, as countess of Maine, August 23, being the eve of St. Bartholomew, as judge of a duel which took place between two champions; one defending the honour of a demoiselle, the other, who was the brother of the poor girl, having assailed her reputation in order to claim her portion.[2] The result of this interesting appeal of battle we are unable to relate.

In the reign of Henry III. Berengaria had again to require the pope's assistance for the payment of her annuity. Her arrears at that time amounted to 4,040*l.* sterling; but the Templars became guarantees and agents for her payments,

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[1] Michelet, in his Hist. of France, has given the most luminous information relative to the cause of the civil wars which raged there for more than a century.

[2] L'Art de Vérifier les Dates, tome xiii. p. 102; from Courvoissier.

and from that time the pecuniary troubles of Berengaria cease to form a feature in our national records. The letters of Berengaria, claiming her arrears of dower from Henry III., are probably from her own pen, as they are in a very different style from those of her ecclesiastical scribe, previously quoted. Contrary to the assumption of royalty perpetually insisted on by her arrogant sister-in-law Isabella, the dowager of John, Berengaria speaks of her exaltation as a matter passed by, and terms herself "the humble queen of England." Addressing herself to the bishop, Peter de Roche, chancellor during Henry III.'s minority, Berengaria says,—

"To our venerable father in Christ, and most cordial friend, Peter, by God's grace bishop of Winchester, Berengaria, by the same grace formerly the *humble* queen of England, wishes health and every good thing.

"We send to you our well-beloved friar Walter, of the Cistercian order, the bearer of these presents, beseeching you humbly and devotedly, with all the humility that we can, that in reference to this present feast of All Saints, (as well as to other terms now past,) you will cause us to be satisfied about the money due to us according to the composition of our dower, which by your mediation we made with our brother John, of happy memory, formerly king of England Fare you well!"

The English regency had the jointures of two queen-dowagers to pay, and certainly too much trouble was not taken to satisfy either. Again friar Walter was despatched, in 1225, to receive the dues of his royal mistress, and was the bearer of another epistle, this time addressed to the young king from his aunt:—

"To her lord and dearest nephew, by God's grace the illustrious king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and earl of Anjou, Berengaria, by the same grace formerly the humble queen of England, wishes health and prosperous success to his utmost desires.

"We requested you by our letters-patent sent to you by friar Walter, *de persona*, our chaplain of the Cistercian order, that you would send to us by the said friar Walter and master Simon, our clerks, 1000 marks sterling, which you owe us at this feast of All Saints,[1] according to the composition of our dowry solemnly drawn out between us and you. But since the said master Simon, being detained by sickness, cannot come over to you, we send in his stead our servant Martin, the bearer of these presents, earnestly requesting you to send us the thousand marks by the said friar Walter and by this Martin, or by one of them, if by any chance impediment both of them cannot come to you. In testimony of which we send you our present letters-patent.

"Given at Mans, the Sunday next before the feast of the apostles Simon and Jude, in the month of October, in the year of our Lord 1225."[2]

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[1] All Saints'-day is the 1st of November, which it would have been before a letter dated at Mans, October 25, could reach England.

[2] Close Rolls.

Henry III. ordered his treasurer and chamberlains to deliver from his treasury to friar Walter, chaplain to queen Berengaria, and to Martin her servant, one thousand marks, which he owed to her at the term of the Ascension of our Lord.[1]

The date of Berengaria's death has generally been fixed about the year 1230; but that was only the year of the completion of her abbey of Espan, and of her final retirement from the world; as from that time she took up her abode within its walls, and finished there her blameless life, at an advanced age, some years afterwards. In the High-street of Mans is an antique and curious structure, embellished with bas-reliefs: the people of the city call it, to this day, queen Berengaria's house or palace. The name is older than the building itself, which is of the architecture of the fifteenth century. Berengaria's dower-palace assuredly stood on the site of this house

Berengaria was interred in her own stately abbey. The following most interesting particulars of her monument we transcribe from the noble work of the late Mr. Stothard, edited by his accomplished widow, now Mrs. Bray. "When Mr. Stothard visited the abbey of Espan, near Mans, in search of the effigy of Berengaria, he found the church converted into a barn, and the object of his inquiry in a mutilated state, concealed under a quantity of wheat. It was in excellent preservation, with the exception of the left arm. By the effigy were lying the bones of the queen, the silent witnesses of the sacrilegious demolition of the tomb. After some search, a portion of the arm belonging to the statue was recovered." Three men, who had assisted in the work of destruction, stated "that the monument, with the figure upon it, stood in the centre of the aisle, at the east end of the church; that there was no coffin within it, but a small square box, containing bones, pieces of linen, some stuff embroidered with gold, and a slate, on which was found an inscription." The slate was found in possession of a canon of the church of St. Julian, at Mans: upon it was engraven an inscription, of which the following is a translation: "The tomb of the most serene

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[1] Close Rolls.

Berengaria, queen of England, the noble founder of this monastery, was restored and removed to this more sacred place. In it were deposited the bones which were found in the ancient sepulchre, on the 27th May, in the year of our Lord 1672." The sides of the tomb are ornamented with deep quatrefoils. The effigy which was upon it is in high relief. It represents the queen with her hair unconfined, but partly concealed by the coverchef, over which is placed an elegant crown. Her mantle is fastened by a narrow band crossing her breast; a large fermail, or brooch, richly set with stones, confines her tunic at the neck. To an ornamental girdle, which encircles her waist, is attached a small aumonière, or purse. This greatly resembles a modern reticule, with a chain and clasped top. "The queen holds in her hand a book, singular from the circumstance of its having embossed on the cover a second representation of herself, as lying on a bier, with waxen torches burning in candlesticks on either side of her."

From early youth to her grave Berengaria manifested devoted love for Richard. Uncomplaining when deserted by him, forgiving when he returned, and faithful to his memory unto death, the royal Berengaria, queen *of* England, though never *in* England, little deserves to be forgotten by any admirer of feminine and conjugal virtue.

ISABELLA OF ANGOULÊME,

QUEEN-CONSORT OF KING JOHN.

Isabella the betrothed of Hugh de Lusignan—Parents—Inheritance—Isabella abducted by king John—Marriage to king John—Challenge of count Hugh—Queen's arrival in England—Recognition—Coronation—Arrival at Rouen—Luxury—Conclusion of Eleanora of Aquitaine's biography—Besieged—Relieved by king John—He captures count Hugh—Death of Eleanora—Effigy—Character—Queen Isabella's dower—Her return to England—Her lover, count Hugh, liberated—Isabella's son born—Her pages—Herd of white cows—King John's cruelty—His jealousy—Her children—Inheritance—Marriage of count Hugh to Isabella's little daughter—Royal dress—Murder of Matilda the Fair—John's atrocities—Meets the queen at Marlborough—She retires to Gloucester with her children—John's death—Queen's proceedings—Coronation of her son—She leaves England—Marries count Hugh—Deprived of her jointure—Detains the princess Joanna—Queen's dower restored—Her pride—Embroils her husband in war—Attempts the life of St. Louis—Humiliation of Isabella—Hated by the Poictevins—Called Jezebel—Retires to Fontevraud—Takes the veil—Dies—Tomb—Effigy—Children of second marriage.

No one would have imagined that Isabella of Angoulême was destined to become the future queen of England when king John ascended the throne, for she was then not only the engaged wife of another, but, according to the custom of the times, had been actually consigned to her betrothed for the purpose of education.

Hugh de Lusignan, surnamed Le Brun,[1] was the affianced

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[1] "Hugh," says G. de Nangis, "whom the people of the little town of Limoges *would* call 'the Brown,' was a noble personage, brave, powerful, and possessing great riches." He did not own the *sobriquet* of Le Brun, but signs himself Lusignan, in his charters.

lord of Isabella. He was eldest son of Hugh IX., the reigning count de la Marche, who governed the provinces which formed the northern boundary of the Aquitanian dominions, called in that age French Poitou. He was a vassal prince of the French crown, and, by virtue of his authority as marcher or guardian of the border, was a most formidable neighbour to the Aquitanian territories; for, if offended, he could at pleasure raise the *ban* and *arrière ban,* and pour thereon the whole feudal militia of a large portion of France.

The mother of king John was deeply impressed with the necessity of conciliating this powerful neighbour. She had been forced, at the death of Richard, to do homage at Tours,[1] in person, to Philip Augustus, for Poitou, 1199; and by her wise mediation she reconciled John and Philip, negotiating an alliance between prince Louis and her grand-daughter, Blanche of Castile. She even travelled to Spain, and was present at the splendid marriage of her grand-daughter, who was wedded at Burgos to prince Louis, by procuration. Afterwards her daughter, the queen of Spain, accompanied her across the Pyrenees, with the young bride, to her native territories of Guienne. Queen Eleanora intended to escort Blanche to Normandy, where prince Louis waited for them;[2] but she fell sick with fatigue, and retreated to Fontevraud towards the close of the year 1199. In a letter written by her on her recovery, she informs king John "that she had been very ill, but that she had sent for her well-beloved cousin, Americus de Thouars, from Poitou; that she was much comforted by his presence, and through God's grace she was convalescent." Queen Eleanora then proceeded to urge her son "to visit immediately his Poictevin provinces, and, for the sake of their peace and preservation, she desired him to form an amicable league with the count de la Marche,"[3] that celebrated Hugh de Lusignan, whose friendship for Cœur de Lion forms a remarkable feature in the history of the crusades. This epistle is dated Fontevraud, 1200, and was the occasion of king John's progress to Aquitaine, in the summer; but little did the writer suppose that, before the year was expired, the whole powerful family of Lusignan would be exasperated by king John's lawless appropriation of the bride wedded to the heir of their house.[1]

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[1] Guillaume de Nangis.

[2] Mezerai, vol. ii. 215, 216.

[3] Fœdera, vol. i. The Latin letter of the aged queen is preceded by another from Americus, urging the same advice, and giving an account of the health of his royal kinswoman. The conclusion of the life of Eleanora of Aquitaine is comprised in this biography.

Isabella was the only child and heiress of Aymer, or Americus, count of Angoulême, surnamed Taillefer. By maternal descent she shared the blood of the Capetian sovereigns, her mother, Alice de Courtenay, being the daughter of Peter de Courtenay, fifth son of Louis VI. king of France. The inheritance of Isabella was the beautiful province of Angoumois, situated in the very heart of the Aquitanian domains, with Perigord on the south, Poitou on the north, Saintonge on the west, and La Limousin on the east. The Angoumois, watered by the clear and sparkling Charente, abounded in all the richest aliments of life; altogether, it was fair and desirable as its heiress. The Provençal language was at that era spoken throughout the district; Isabella of Angoulême may therefore be reckoned the third of our Provençal queens. The province to which she was heiress had been governed by her ancestors ever since the reign of Charles the Bald.

Isabella, being betrothed to Hugh de Lusignan, eldest son of the count de la Marche, had been consigned to the care of her husband's family, according to the feudal custom. At the period of king John's arrival, she was residing in the castle of Lusignan, under the guardianship of the count of Eu, the uncle of her spouse. The young lady was nearly fifteen; her marriage was to take place on the return of her bridegroom from some distant feudal service connected with the accession of John as duke of Aquitaine. Meantime, the count of Eu received the English king most hospitably: the chief entertainment was hunting in the chases pertaining to the demesne of Lusignan, which were then the most celebrated for deer in

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[1] Hugh IX., the friend and fellow-crusader of king Richard, was alive long after his son's betrothment to Isabella. The bereft lover of Isabella succeeded his father by the title of Hugh X. There were thirteen counts of this house, successively, of the name of Hugh; a fact which makes their identity difficult without close investigation.

France. At one of these hunting parties it is supposed that king John first saw the beautiful *fiancée* of the absent Lusignan: tradition says,[1] "that meeting her in the glades of the chase, he carried her off, screaming with terror, to the stronghold of his sovereignty, Bourdeaux." In reality, the abduction was made by collusion of the parents of the bride: they sent to the count of Eu, requesting his permission that she might visit them for the purpose of being present at a day of high ceremonial, on which they paid their homage to king John for the province of Angoumois.[2] Indeed, it may be considered certain that the young lady herself, as their sole heir, was required to acknowledge her lord-paramount as duke of Aquitaine. The count of Eu surrendered the fair heiress, at the request of her father; he has been accused of betraying the interests of his nephew, but wholly without foundation.

The parents of Isabella, when they perceived that their sovereign was captivated with the budding charms of their daughter, dishonourably encouraged his passion, and by deceitful excuses to the count of Eu, prevented the return of Isabella to the castle of Lusignan; a proceeding the more infamous, since subsequent events plainly showed that the heart of the maiden secretly preferred her betrothed. Had John Plantagenet remained in the same state of poverty as when his father surnamed him Lackland, the fierce Hugh de Lusignan might have retained his beautiful bride; but at the time his fancy was captivated by Isabella, her parents saw him universally recognised as the possessor of the first empire in Europe. They had just done homage to him as the monarch of the south of France, and they knew the English people had acknowledged him as king, in preference to his nephew Arthur; that he had been actually crowned king of England, and that his brow had been circled with the chaplet of golden roses which formed the ducal coronet of Normandy.

John was already married to a lady, who had neither been crowned with him, nor acknowledged queen of England; yet she appears to have been the bride of his fickle choice. The son of his great uncle, Robert earl of Gloucester,[1] had left three daughters, co-heiresses of his vast possessions. The youth and beauty of Avisa, the youngest of the sisters, induced prince John to woo her as his wife. The wedding took place at Richard's coronation, but the church forbade the pair to live together.[2] The pope, who had previously commanded the divorce of Avisa from John, because the empress Matilda and Robert earl of Gloucester had been half brother and sister, now murmured at the broken contract between Isabella and the heir of Lusignan; but as this betrothment does not seem to have been accompanied by any vow or promise on the part of the bride, his opposition was vain.

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[1] Vatout, History of Château d'Eu.

[2] William le Breton.—Guizot's French Collection. Dr. Henry asserts the same, and gives Hoveden and M. Paris as authorities.

The lady Isabella, as much dazzled as her parents by the splendour of the triple crowns of England, Normandy, and Aquitaine, would not acknowledge that she had consented to any marriage-contract with count Hugh. As Isabella preferred being a queen to giving her hand to the man she really loved, no one could right the wrongs of the ill-treated Lusignan. Moreover, the mysterious chain of feudality interwove its inextricable links and meshes, even round the sacrament of marriage. King John, as lord-paramount of Aquitaine, could have rendered invalid any wedlock that the heiress of the Angoumois might contract without his consent; he could have forbidden his fair vassaless to marry the subject of king Philip, and if she had remained firmly true to her first love, he could have declared her fief forfeited for disobedience to her immediate lord.[3] King John and Isabella were married at Bourdeaux, August 24th, 1200. Their hands were united by the archbishop of Bourdeaux, who had previously held a synod, assisted by the bishop of Poitou, and solemnly declared that no impediment existed to the marriage. There was, however, a considerable disparity of age: John was thirty-two, while Isabella had scarcely seen fifteen years.

The abduction of his bride threw count Hugh of Lusignan into despair: he did not, however, quietly submit to the destruction of his hopes, but challenged to mortal combat the royal interloper between him and his betrothed.[1] John received the cartel with remarkable coolness, saying, that if count Hugh wished for combat, he would appoint a champion to fight with him; but the count declared that John's champions were hired bravoes and vile mercenaries, unfit for the encounter of a wronged lover and true knight. Thus unable to obtain satisfaction, the valiant marcher waited his hour of revenge, while king John sailed with his bride in triumph to England. He kept his Christmas with her, 1201, at Guildford, "where," says Roger of Wendover, "he distributed a great number of festive garments." He was desirous that Isabella should be recognised as his wife, not only by the peers, but by the people; therefore he called "a common council of the kingdom" at Westminster. The ancient wittena-gemot seems the model of this assembly. Here the young Isabella was introduced, and acknowledged as the queen-consort of England. Her coronation was appointed for the 8th of October, and there exists a charter in the Tower, expressing "that Isabella of Angoulême was crowned queen by the common consent of the barons, clergy, and people of England."[2] Her coronation took place on that day by the archbishop of Canterbury. Clement Fitz-William was paid thirty-three shillings, for strewing Westminster-hall with herbs and rushes at the coronation of lady Isabella the queen; and the chamberlains of the Norman exchequer were ordered to pay Eustace the chaplain and Ambrose the songster twenty-five shillings, for singing the hymn *Christus vicit* at the unction and crowning of the said lady queen.[3] The expenses of her dress at this time were by no means extravagant: three cloaks of fine linen, one of scarlet cloth, and one gray pelisse, costing together twelve pounds five-and-fourpence, were all that was afforded to the fair Provençal bride on this august occasion. The whole of the intervening months between October and Easter were spent by the king and queen in a continual round of feasting and voluptuousness. At the Easter festival of 1210 they were the guests of archbishop Hubert, at Canterbury,[1] where they were once more crowned,[2] or rather, they wore their crowns, according to the ancient English custom at this high festival; it being the office of the primate of England always to place them on the heads of the king and queen on such occasions, when he was abiding in the vicinity of royalty.

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[1] Tyrrell.

[2] It must be noticed, that the church forbade the wedlock of cousins of illegitimate descent as strictly as those by marriage.

[3] See Bracton. "By the feudal law, any woman who is an heir forfeits her lands if she marries without her lord's consent."

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[1] Vatout, Hist. of Eu. He says that Isabella and John were married at Angoulême.

[2] Roger Hoveden.

[3] Madox.

Wars, and rumours of wars, awoke the beautiful Isabella and king John from their dream of pleasure. Constance duchess of Bretagne had eloped from her husband, the earl of Chester, and married a valiant Poictevin, sir Guy of Thouars,[3] who showed every demonstration of successfully asserting the claims of his son-in-law, young Arthur Plantagenet, for whose cause Anjou and Maine had already declared. Added to this alarming intelligence was the news that Lusignan and his brother, the count of Eu, were conspiring with the family of Bretagne, and raising insurrections in Poitou and Normandy, to avenge the abduction of Isabella of Angoulême. These troubles caused Isabella and her husband to embark at Portsmouth for Normandy. King John sailed in a separate galley from the queen, and in stress of weather ran for the Isle of Wight, a place of retirement where John often abode for months together. The queen's ship was in the greatest distress, but at last made the port of Barfleur, where king John found Isabella waiting his arrival.

The insurrection, of which the disappointed lover of Isabella was the mover, was somewhat retarded by the death of Constance[4] duchess of Bretagne, in 1201, soon after the birth of her third child, the princess Alice, who was finally the heiress of the duchy. King John, regardless of the tempest that still muttered around him, established himself at Rouen, and gave way to a career of indolent voluptuousness, little in accordance with the restless activity of his warlike nobility. In that era, when five in the morning was the established breakfast-time, and half-past ten in the forenoon the orthodox dinner-hour, for all ranks and conditions of men, the courtiers were scandalized at finding that king John never left his pillow before mid-day, at which time they saw him, with contempt, issuing from the chamber of the fair Isabella: "it was as if she held him by sorcery or witchcraft."[1] This mode of life made him far more unpopular, in the thirteenth century, than the perpetration of a few more murders and abductions, like those with which his memory stands already charged. His young queen shared some of this blame, as the enchantress who kept him chained in her bowers of luxury. The royal pair paid, however, some attention to the fine arts, for the magnificent mosaic pavement of the palace of Rouen was laid down while the queen kept her court there.[2]

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[1] Tyrrell.

[2] Hoveden.

[3] Argentre, Breton. Hist. The disconsolate widowhood of Constance exists only in the pages of fiction.

[4] Argentre.

Eleanora of Aquitaine, now advancing into her eightieth year, still acted a queenly part on the arena of Europe. After resigning her vice-regency of England[3] into the hands of king John, she had assumed the sceptre of her native dominions, and was then governing Aquitaine, residing with a peace establishment, in perfect security, at her summer castle of Mirabel, in Poitou, when count Hugh de Lusignan, joining his forces with those of young Arthur of Bretagne, suddenly laid siege to the residence of the aged queen. This was a plan of count Hugh's devising, who meant, if Eleanora had been captured, to have exchanged her for his lost spouse. But Eleanora, after they had stormed the town, betook herself to the citadel of Mirabel, from whose lofty heights she scoffed at their efforts: she sent to her son for speedy aid, and, with a slight garrison and scanty provisions, held out heroically till his arrival. Once, and once only, did the recreant John prove himself of "the right stem of great Plantagenet." When he heard of his mother's danger, he traversed France with lightning speed, and arriving unexpectedly before Mirabel, his forces hemmed in count Hugh and duke Arthur between the town and citadel. The enemies of John had reckoned on his character as a sluggard and *fainéant* knight, but they reckoned in vain; he gave them fierce battle on his arrival, and overthrew them with an utter defeat, taking prisoners his rival in love, count Hugh, and his rival in empire, duke Arthur, together with four-and-twenty of the principal barons of Poitou, who had risen for the right of young Arthur, or were allies of the count. Ralph of Coggeshall and Matthew Paris declare that queen Eleanora charged her son, on her malediction, not to harm the noble boy whom he had made his prisoner. While the queen-mother retained her faculties, John contented himself with incarcerating Arthur in the citadel of Falaise; but he insulted count Hugh, the unfortunate lover of his queen, with every species of personal indignity, carrying him and the insurgent barons of Poitou after him, wherever he went, "chained hand and foot, in tumbril carts drawn by oxen,"—"a mode of travelling," says a Provençal chronicler, very pathetically, "to which they were not accustomed." In this manner he dragged them after him, till he made them embark with him for England.[1] Queen Isabella must have exerted her utmost influence to save the unfortunate Lusignan from the fate of his fellow-prisoners, for two-and-twenty Poictevin lords, who had been exhibited with count Hugh in the carts, were starved to death in the dungeons of Corfe-castle, by the orders of king John.[2] The lover of Isabella, positively refusing any submission to the abductor of his bride, was consigned to a weary confinement in the donjon of Bristol-castle, at the same time with John's other hapless prisoner, Eleanora, surnamed the Pearl of Brittany,[3] the sister of Arthur.

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[1] Wendover, vol. ii. p. 207. M. Paris.

[2] Ducarel.

[3] She would not recognise Arthur as the rightful heir, for fear Constance would govern England during his minority.

Isabella of Angoulême had not borne an heir to John when Arthur was cut off in 1202; therefore, after John had destroyed this promising scion of Plantagenet, the sole representative of that heroic line was his dishonoured self.[1] The decision of the twelve peers of France, convened to inquire into the fate of Arthur, declared Normandy forfeited by king John in 1203. The demise of queen Eleanora, his mother, took place the year after: she lived to mourn over the dismemberment of the continental possessions of her family. Paulus Emilius, in his Life of Philip Augustus, declares that the queen-mother interceded strenuously for Arthur, and died of sorrow when she found the depths of guilt into which John had plunged.

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[1] Matthew Paris details this incident nearly in similar words.

[2] Hoveden and Dr. Henry.

[3] There is reason to suppose that this unfortunate lady, on whom the lineal right of the English crown devolved, took the vows after a long imprisonment. From a bundle of charters belonging to the abbey of Fontevraud, examined by sir Thomas Phillipps, bart., it is evident that Eleanora of Bretagne was appointed, by the abbess of Fontevraud, superior of the nunnery of Ambresbury. All known hitherto of the sister of Arthur was, that she died in 1235, and was buried at Ambresbury.

The annals of the monks of Fontevraud testify that queen Eleanora took the veil of their order in the year 1202, and that she died in the year 1204, having been for many months wholly dead to the world. Her last charter was given to the men of Oleron,[2] soon after the demise of her son, Richard I.; in which document she confirmed the privileges of this great maritime guild or fraternity. Adversity evidently improved the character of Eleanora of Aquitaine; and after the violent passions of her youth had been corrected by sorrow and experience, her life exhibits many traces of a great ruler and magnanimous sovereign. A good moral education would have rendered Eleanora of Aquitaine one of the greatest characters of her time. She had been reared in her sunny fatherland as the gay votaress of pleasure; her intellectual cultivation had been considerable, but its sole end was to enhance the delights of a voluptuous life, by calling into activity all the powers of a poetic mind. Slowly and surely she learned the stern lesson of life,—that power, beauty, and royalty are but vanity, if not linked with moral excellence. She was buried by the side of Henry II. at Fontevraud, where her tomb was to be seen, with its enamelled statue, till the French revolution.[1] The face of this effigy is beautifully worked with strokes of the pencil; the features are noble and intellectual. Eleanora wears the gorget, wimple, and coverchef; over this head-gear is a regal diadem: the royal mantle is folded gracefully round her waist; it is of garter blue, figured with silver crescents. A book was once held in the hands, but both hands and book are now broken away;[2] nevertheless, in our portrait, they have been restored.

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[1] It is in an allusion to this fact that Le Breton, in his beautiful description of Arthur's death, (which, with other rich though irrelevant matter, we are forced to exclude,) makes Arthur exclaim, when pleading passionately for his life, "Ah, my uncle, spare the son of thy brother! spare thy young nephew,—spare thy *race!*"

[2] Eleanora of Aquitaine, at that era the greatest naval potentate in the world, is seen in this charter to exercise full sovereignty over these merchant islanders. "To the beloved and faithful marines of Oleron," says Eleanora, "we confirm the former grants of that venerable and illustrious man, our lord Henry king of England, with whom we contracted our matrimony, on condition that the islanders of Oleron keep faith with our heirs." She names not king John as such; but this charter is followed by another from him, "confirming, for the future, all that our dearest and most venerable mother has granted during her life." Nor is this forgotten charter without a deep and vital interest to our country, for the distant isle of Oleron was the source of our maritime laws, and the cradle of our infant commerce.—Fœdera, vol. i. To one of her charters, preserved in the Fontevraud collection in the Bibliothèque Royale, examined by sir T. Phillipps, is appended the seal of Eleanora, representing her figure at full length, standing with a fleur-de-lis in her right hand; she holds in the left a globe, symbol of sovereignty, on which is a bird standing on a cross. The charter itself is a great curiosity, granting certain lands, annual value 40*s.*, to Adam Cook and Joan his wife, on condition of their paying her every year one pound of cinnamon. Adam was possibly her cook.

With his mother, king John lost all fear and shame. Distinct as his character stands on a bad eminence, the reader of general history knows little of the atrocity of this man, whose wickedness was of the active and impetuous quality sometimes seen in the natives of the south of Europe, combined with the most prominent defects of the English disposition. He exhibits the traits of the depraved Provençal, whose civilization had at that era degenerated to corruption, joined to the brutality of his worst English subjects, then in a semi-barbarous state. Isabella's influence did not mend his manners: he became notoriously worse after his union with her. Ignorance could not be pleaded as an excuse for John's enormities; like all the sons of Eleanora of Aquitaine, he had literary tastes. Some items in his Close rolls prove the fact, that king John read books of a high character. His mandate to Reginald de Cornhill requires him to send to Windsor the Romance of the History of England.[3] The abbot of Reading supplied his sovereign with the Old Testament, Hugh St. Victor on the Sacraments, the Sentences of Petre Lombard, the Epistles of St. Austin, Origen's Treatise, and Arian. The abbot likewise acknowledges that he has a book belonging to the king called 'Pliny.'[1] In short, the abbot of Reading was evidently librarian to king John.

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[1] Her beautiful statue is still preserved, thanks to the research and zeal of our lamented antiquary Stothard.

[2] Montfaucon's engraving gives the hands and book. This Benedictine antiquary, who wrote in the time of Louis XIII., more than two centuries nearer the erection of the monument, had it drawn before it was defaced.

[3] April 29, 1205. See Excerpta Historica, p. 393. The word 'romance' means that, like Geoffrey of Monmouth, and all *popular* histories, the composition was in metre.

After the dower-lands of the English queens had been left free, by the death of the queen-mother and the composition of Berengaria, king John endowed his wife most richly with many towns in the west of England, besides Exeter and the tin-mines of Cornwall and Devonshire. The jointure-palace of the heiress of Angoulême was that ancient residence of the Conqueror, the castle of Berkhamstead, in Hertfordshire. Exeter and Rockingham castles pertained to her dower.

Queen Isabella, during the king's absence, brought him an heir at Winchester, who received the name of Henry. After his return to England, king John began utterly to disregard all the ancient laws of his kingdom; and when the barons murmured, he required from them the surrender of their children as hostages. In the Tower rolls exist documents, proving that those young nobles were appointed to wait on his queen[2] at Windsor and Winchester, where they attended her in bands, serving her at meals, and following her at cavalcades and processions. The tragedy of the unfortunate family of De Braose was occasioned by the resistance of the parents to these ordinances, in 1211. King John had demanded the eldest son of William de Braose, lord of Bramber, in Sussex, as a page to wait on queen Isabella, meaning him in reality as a hostage for his father's allegiance. When the king's message was delivered at Bramber by a courtier, who bore the ominous name of Mauluc,[3] the imprudent lady de Braose declared, in his hearing, "that she would not surrender her children to a king who had murdered his own nephew." The words of the unfortunate mother were duly reported by the malicious messenger. The lady de Braose repented of her rashness when it was too late, and strove in vain to propitiate queen Isabella by rich gifts. Among other offerings, she sent the queen a present of a herd of four hundred cows and one beautiful bull: this peerless herd was white as milk, all but the ears, which were red. This strange present to Isabella did not avert the deadly wrath of king John, for he seized the unfortunate family at Meath in Ireland, whither they had fled for safety. The lord of Bramber, his wife and children, were conveyed to the old castle at Windsor and enclosed in a strong room, where they were deliberately starved to death. Father, mother, and five innocent little ones suffered, in our England, the fate of count Ugolino and his family,—an atrocity, compared with which the dark stain of Arthur's murder fades to the hue of a venial crime.

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[1] Excerpta Historica, p. 399.

[2] Two of these hostage children, Elizabeth heiress of sir Ralph d'Eyncourt of Sizergh-castle, in Westmoreland, and Walter the heir of sir Thomas Strickland, of Strickland, formed an attachment for each other at the court of Isabella, and afterwards married.

[3] Peter de Mauluc was said to be the assistant of John in the murder of Arthur; hence the taunt of the lady de Braose.—Speed. She was a Norman baroness by birth; her name, Matilda St. Vallery.

The passion of John for his queen, though it was sufficiently strong to embroil him in war, was not exclusive enough to secure conjugal fidelity; the king tormented her with jealousy, while on his part he was far from setting her a good example, for he often invaded the honour of the female nobility. The name of the lover of Isabella has never been ascertained, nor is it clear that she was ever guilty of any dereliction from rectitude; but John revenged the wrong, that perhaps only existed in his malignant imagination, in a manner peculiar to himself. He made his mercenaries assassinate the person whom he suspected of supplanting him in his queen's affections, with two others supposed to be accomplices, and secretly hung their bodies over the bed of Isabella,[1] an event which is evidently alluded to in the narrative given by Matthew Paris, concerning the embassy king John sent to the Mahometan sovereign of Spain, called the Miramolin, offering to ally himself with him, and to renounce the Christian religion. The Moslem chief strongly suspected that the offered alliance was of no great value; he therefore cross-questioned one of the envoys, 'Robert the clerk,' a small, dark, deformed man, with a Jewish physiognomy,—indeed, Matthew Paris insinuates that he was a Jew in disguise of a priest. Partly by bribes and partly by threats, the Moslem obtained the following description of king John's person and family affairs: "The king of England is about fifty years of age; his hair is quite hoary; his figure is made for strength, compact but not tall; his queen hates him, and is hated by him, she being an evil-minded, adulterous woman, often found guilty of crimes, upon which king John seized her paramours, and had them strangled with a rope on her bed."[1] Whatsoever degree of truth may pertain to these accusations, it is certain that about the year 1212 the queen had been consigned to captivity, having been conveyed to Gloucester-abbey under the ward of one of her husband's mercenary leaders. In a record-roll of king John, he directs Theodoric de Tyes "to go to Gloucester with our lady queen, and there keep her in the chamber where the princess Joanna had been nursed, till he heard further from him." Joanna was born in 1210, according to the majority of the chroniclers. The queen's disgrace was about two years after the birth of her daughter.

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[1] Lingard.

The queen had brought John a lovely family, but the birth of his children failed to secure her against harsh treatment: she was at this time the mother of two sons, and a daughter. Isabella inherited the province of the Angoumois in the year 1213: it is probable that a reconciliation then took place between the queen and her husband, since her mother, the countess of Angoulême, came to England, and put herself under the protection of John. Soon after he went to Angoulême with Isabella. To facilitate the restoration of the Poictevin provinces, again seized by Philip Augustus, John found it necessary to form an alliance with his former rival, count Hugh de Lusignan.[1] Although that nobleman had been restored to liberty by king John for some years, he perversely chose to remain a bachelor, in order to remind all the world of the perfidy of that faithless beauty who had broken her troth for a crown. The only stipulation which could induce him to assist king John was, that he would give him the eldest daughter of Isabella as a wife, in the place of the mother. In compliance with his request, the infant princess Joanna was betrothed to him, and forthwith given into his charge, that she might be educated and brought up in one of his castles, as her mother had been before her. After this alliance, count Hugh effectually cleared the Poictevin borders of the French invaders; and king John, flushed with his temporary success, returned with his queen, to plague England with new acts of tyranny.[2]

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[1] M. Paris; passage translated by Dr. Giles, in illustration of Roger of Wendover, vol. ii. p. 285. Matthew expressly declares that he wrote what he heard from the lips of Robert the clerk himself, who, in reward for undertaking his anti-Christian mission, was forced by his master as a receiver of revenue into the abbey of St. Alban's, where Matthew was a monk. If, as M. Michelet points out, the tendencies of the princes of the south of France were decidedly Mahometan, it was the plain policy of king John, their sovereign, to seek the alliance of the chief of the Arabs in Spain. This embassy must have taken place in the last year of John's reign, he being, in 1216, just fifty, for he was born in the year 1166. Of course, the misconduct of the queen must have occurred at some previous period.

Although the most extravagant prince in the world in regard to his own personal expenses, John was parsimonious enough toward his beautiful queen. In one of his wardrobe-rolls there is an order for a gray cloth pelisson for Isabella, guarded with nine bars of gray fur. In king John's wardrobe-roll is a warrant for giving out cloth to make two robes for the queen, each to consist of five ells; one of green cloth, the other of brunet. The green robe, lined with cendal or sarcenet, is considered worth sixty shillings. The king likewise orders for his queen, cloth for a pair of purple sandals, and four pair of women's boots, one pair to be embroidered in circles round the ankles. There is, likewise, an item for the repair of Isabella's mirror.[3] The dress of John was costly and glittering in the extreme, for he was, in addition to other follies and frailties, the greatest fop in Europe. At one of his Christmas festivals he appeared in a red satin mantle embroidered with sapphires and pearls, a tunic of white damask, a girdle set with garnets and sapphires, while the baldric that crossed from his left shoulder to sustain his sword, was set with diamonds and emeralds, and his white gloves were adorned, one with a ruby, and the other with a sapphire.[1] The richness of king John's dress, and the splendour of his jewellery, partly occasioned the extravagant demands he made on the purses of his people, both church and laity; he supplied his wants by a degree of corruption that proves him utterly insensible to every feeling of honour, both as a man and a king, and shamelessly left rolls and records whereby posterity were enabled to read such entries as the following ludicrous specimens of bribery:—"Robert de Vaux gave five of his best palfreys, that the king might hold his tongue about Henry Pinel's wife." What tale of scandal king John had the opportunity of telling, deponent saith not; but the entry looks marvellously undignified in regal accounts, and shows that shame as well as honour was dead in the heart of John. "To the bishop of Winchester is given one tun of good wine, for *not* putting the king in mind to give a girdle to the countess of Albemarle." The scarcity of coin and absence of paper-money made bribery remarkably shameless in those days; palfreys prancing at the levee, and the four hundred milk-white kine of the unfortunate lady de Braose lowing before the windows of Isabella, must have had an odd effect.[2]

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[1] Matthew Paris.

[2] Oct. 20, 1214.

[3] Excerpta Historica, p. 398.

The queen, soon after her return to England in 1214, was superseded in the fickle heart of her husband by Matilda Fitz-Walter, surnamed the Fair. The abduction of this lady, who, to do her justice, thoroughly abhorred the royal felon, was the exploit which completed the exasperation of the English barons, who flew to arms for the purpose of avenging the honour of the most distinguished among their class, lord Fitz-Walter, father of the fair victim of John. Every one knows that, clad in steel, they met their monarch John at Runnymede, and there

"In happy hour,
Made the fell tyrant feel his people's power."

The unfortunate Matilda, who had roused the jealousy of the queen, and excited the lawless passion of John, was supposed to be murdered by him, in the spring of the year 1215.[1]

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[1] Such ornamented gloves are seen on his effigy at Worcester cathedral, and on that of his father at Fontevraud.

[2] It realizes the satire of Pope, applied to the Walpole ministry. The poet, lauding the convenience of bank-notes in such cases, contrasts the clumsy conveyance of tangible property as bribes, saying,

"A hundred oxen at thy levee roar."

After the signature of Magna Charta, king John retired in a rage to his fortress at Windsor, the scene of many of his secret murders. Here he gave way to tempests of personal fury, resembling his father's bursts of passion; he execrated his birth, and seizing sticks and clubs, vented his maniacal feelings by biting and gnawing them, and then breaking them in pieces. While these emotions were raging, mischief matured itself in his soul; for after passing a sleepless night at Windsor, he departed for the Isle of Wight,[2] where he sullenly awaited the arrival of some bands of mercenaries he had sent for from Brabant and Guienne, with whose assistance he meant to revenge himself on the barons. In the fair isle John passed whole days, idly sauntering on the beach, chatting familiarly with the fishers, and even joining in piratical expeditions with them against his own subjects. He was absent some weeks; every one thought he was lost, and few wished that he might ever be found. He emerged from his concealment in good earnest when his mercenary troops arrived, and then he began that atrocious progress across the island, always alluded to by his contemporaries with horror. One trait of his conduct shall serve for a specimen of the rest: the king every morning took delight in firing, with his own hands, the house that had sheltered him the preceding night.

In the midst of this diabolical career he reconciled himself to Isabella, whom he had kept in a state of palace restraint ever since the abduction of Matilda the Fair.[1] The queen advanced as far as Marlborough to meet him, where they abode some days at the royal palace on the forest of Savernake,[2] which was one of the principal dower-castles of our queens. At this time there is an intimation on the record-rolls, that the new buildings at the queen's castle on Savernake were completed; among which were kitchens, with fire-places for roasting oxen whole. John consigned to the care of Isabella, at this time, his heir prince Henry, with whom she retired to Gloucester, where the rest of the royal children were abiding. The queen had, in the year 1211, become the mother of a second daughter, and in the succeeding year she gave birth to a third, named Isabella.[3]

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[1] "About the year 1215," saith the book of Dunmow, "there arose a *great discord between king John and his barons, because* of Matilda, surnamed the Fair, daughter of Robert lord Fitz-Walter, whom the king unlawfully loved, but could not obtain her, nor her father's consent thereto. Whereupon the king banished the said Fitz-Walter, the most valiant knight in England, and caused his castle in London, called Baynard, and all his other dwellings, to be spoiled. Which being done, he sent to Matilda the Fair about his old suit in love, and because she would not agree to his wickedness, the messenger poisoned an egg, and bade her keepers, when she was hungry, boil it and give her to eat. She did so, and died." Tradition points out one of the lofty turrets, perched on the top, at the corner of the White tower of London, as the scene of this murder. She was conveyed there, after the storming of Baynard's-Castle, in 1213. In a like spirit to count Julian, her enraged father brought the French into England to avenge his daughter. Matilda's tomb and effigy are still to be seen in the priory church of Little Dunmow, in Essex.—See Brayley's Graphic Perambulator.

[2] Barnard's History of England.

Scarcely had the queen retreated to the strong city of Gloucester, when that invasion by prince Louis of France took place which is so well known in general history. The barons, driven to desperation by John's late outrages, offered the heir of France the crown, if he would aid them against their tormentor.[4] Hunted into an obscure corner of his kingdom, in the autumn of 1216 king John confided his person and regalia to the men of Lynn, in Norfolk. But as his affairs summoned him northward, he crossed the Wash to Swinshead-abbey, in Lincolnshire. The tide coming in unexpectedly, swept away part of his army and his baggage. His splendid regalia was swallowed in the devouring waters, and John himself scarcely escaped with life. The king arrived at Swinshead-abbey unwell and dispirited, and, withal, in a malignant ill temper. As he sat at meat in the abbot's refectory, he gave vent to his spleen by saying, "That he hoped to make the halfpenny loaf cost a shilling before the year was over." A Saxon monk heard this malicious speech with indignation. If the evidence of contemporary historians may be believed, John uttered this folly at dinner; and before his dessert was ended, he was poisoned in a dish of autumn pears.

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[1] Matthew of Westminster.

[2] See Fœdera, in many deeds.

[3] Afterwards married to the emperor of Germany.

[4] Louis' claim was founded on his marriage with the celebrated Blanche of Castile, niece to John.

In all probability, the king was seized with one of those severe typhus fevers often endemic in the fenny countries at the close of the year. The symptoms of alternate cold and heat, detailed by the chroniclers, approximate closely with that disease. Whether by the visitation of God, or through the agency of man, the fact is evident, that king John was stricken with a fatal illness at Swinshead; but, sick as he was, he ordered himself to be put in a litter, and carried forward on his northern progress. At Newark he could proceed no further, but gave himself up to the fierce attacks of the malady. He sent for the abbot and monks of Croxton, and made full confession of all his sins, (no slight undertaking;) he then forgave his enemies, and enjoined those about him to charge his son, Henry, to do the same; and, after taking the eucharist, and making all his officers swear fealty to his eldest son, he expired, commending his soul to God, and his body to burial in Worcester cathedral, according to his especial directions, close to the grave of St. Wulstan,[1] a Saxon bishop of great reputation for sanctity, lately canonized. This vicinity the dying king evidently considered likely to be convenient for keeping his corpse from the attacks of the Evil one, whom he had indefatigably served during his life. His contemporary historians did not seem to think that this arrangement, however prudently planned, was likely to be effectual in altering his destination; as one of them sums up his character in these words of terrific energy,—" Hell felt itself defiled by the presence of John."

The queen and the royal children were at Gloucester when the news of the king's death arrived. Isabella and the earl of Pembroke immediately caused prince Henry to be proclaimed in the streets of that city. In the coronation-letter of Henry III. is preserved the memory of a very prudent step taken by Isabella as queen-mother. As the kingdom was it an unsettled and tumultuous state, and as she was by no means assured of the safety of the young king, she provided for the security of both her sons by sending the second, prince Richard, to Ireland, which was at that time loyal and tranquil. The boy-king says in his proclamation,[1] "The lady queen our mother has, upon advice, and having our assent to it, sent our brother Richard to Ireland, yet so that you and our kingdom can speedily see him again."

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[1] The noble monument of king John, in black marble, with his fine effigy, is to be seen in Worcester cathedral, though now removed to the choir, at some distance from the desirable neighbourhood of the Saxon saint. John was reckoned by his contemporaries extremely handsome; but the great breadth over the cheeks and ears, which is the leading characteristic of this monarch, is not consistent with modern ideas of beauty.

Only nine days after the death of John, the queen caused her young son to be crowned in the cathedral of Gloucester.[2] Although so recently a widow, the extreme exigencies of the times forced Isabella to assist at her child's coronation. The regal diadem belonging to his father being lost in Lincoln Washes,[3] and the crown of Edward the Confessor being far distant in Westminster-abbey, the little king was crowned with a gold throat-collar belonging to his mother. A very small part of England recognised the claims of Isabella's son: even Gloucester was divided, the citizens who adhered to the young king being known by the cross of Aquitaine, cut in white cloth and worn on the breast. Henry was then just nine years old; but though likely to be a minor for some years, it must be observed that the queen-mother was offered no share in the government; and as several queens of England had frequently acted as regents, during the absence of their husbands or sons, this exclusion is a proof that the English held Isabella in little esteem. London and the adjacent counties were then in the hands of Louis of France. Among other possessions he held the queen's dower-palace of Berkhamstead, which was strongly garrisoned with French soldiers. However, the valour and wisdom of the protector Pembroke, and the intrepidity of Hubert de Burgh, in a few months cleared England of these intruders.

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[1] Fœdera, vol. i.

[2] Speed's Chronicle.

[3] Reports were circulated in Norfolk that the royal circlet of king John was certainly found, in the late excavation for the Eau brink drainage, near the spot indicated by chroniclers as the scene of this loss; and a well-sinker, who knew nothing of history, informed a gentleman of Norfolk of a curious discovery he made, when digging for a well in the same neighbourhood. "I found," said he, "in the course of my well-digging, a king's crown." On being desired to describe it, he declared that it was not larger than the top of a quart pot, but cut out in ornaments round the top; that it looked black, and that he had no idea of the value, for when a Jew pedlar offered him three pounds ten shillings, he was glad to accept it, but he afterwards heard that the Jew had made upwards of fifty pounds by the speculation. This was, most likely, one of the golden coronals or circlets fixed at the back of the king's helmets, as its size shows that it was not the regal crown.

Before her year of widowhood had expired, Isabella retired to her native city, Angoulême, July 1217. The princess Joanna resided in the vicinity of her mother's domains, being at Lusignan, the castle of the count de la Marche. Nothing could be more singular than the situation of queen Isabella as mother to the promised bride of count Hugh, and that bride under ten years of age. The valiant Lusignan himself was absent from his territories, venting his superfluous combativeness and soothing his crosses in love by a crusade, which he undertook in 1216. The demise of his father obliged him to revisit Poitou in 1220, where he was frequently in company with the queen of England, who was at the same time his own early betrothed, and the mother of his young *fiancée*. Isabella, at the age of thirty-four, still retained that marvellous beauty which had caused her to be considered the Helen of the middle ages. It is therefore no great wonder that she quickly regained her old place in the constant heart of the valiant marcher. Two or three of her letters occur, addressed to her young son the king of England, in which Lusignan's name is mentioned with much approbation. Soon after, we find the following notation in Matthew of Westminster: "In the year 1220, or about that time, Isabella, queen-dowager of England, having before crossed the seas, took to her husband *her former spouse*, the count of Marche, in France, without leave of her son, the king, or his council."[1] He further observes, that "As the queen took this step without asking the consent of any one in England, the council of regency withheld her dower from her, to the indignation of her husband."

Isabella announced her marriage to her son in a manner perfectly consistent with the artifice of her character. If she had honestly acknowledged that she was glad of an opportunity of making amends to her former lover for the ill treatment he had previously received from her and king John, particularly as she found she was still beloved by him, no one could have blamed her. But no: according to her own account she did not take the count de la Marche to please herself,—she made a sacrifice of self in the whole proceeding; or rather, when all other means of managing this formidable neighbour to Aquitaine failed, "ourself married the said Hugh, God knows, my dear son, rather for your benefit than our own." However, here is the lady's letter, one of the recent discoveries among the Norman rolls[1] in the Tower of London:

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[1] Matthew Paris. Rymer's Fœdera. Hemmingford. Wikes. Rapin, p. 315. Carte. Tyrrell. Collier, and Moreri.

> "To our dearest son Henry, by the grace of God king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, Isabella countess of Anjou and Angoulême sends health and her maternal benediction.
>
> "We hereby signify to you, that when the counts of Marche and Eu[2] departed this life, the lord Hugh de Lusignan remained alone and without heirs in Poitou; and his friends would not permit that our daughter should be united to him in marriage, *because her age is so tender*,[3] but counselled him to take a wife from whom he might speedily hope for an heir; and it was proposed that he should take a wife in France, which if he had done, all your land in Poitou and Gascony would be lost. We, therefore, seeing the great peril that might accrue if that marriage should take place, (when our counsellors could give us no better advice,) ourself married the said count de Marche; and God knows that we did this rather for your benefit than our own. Wherefore we entreat you, dear son, that this thing may be pleasing to you, seeing it conduces greatly to the profit of you and yours; and we earnestly pray that you will restore to him (Hugh de Lusignan, count de Marche) his lawful right; that is, Niort,[4] and the castles of Exeter and Rockingham, which your father, our former husband, bequeathed us."

Lest the council of young Henry III. (to whom this choice epistle was really addressed) should not be sufficiently propitiated by the queen-mother's self-sacrifice, in taking Marche herself for fear a French spouse might render him mischievously disposed to them, she does not fail to set forth his formidable position as a border potentate, holding, withal, a great judicial office of a governing nature, paramount over the mysterious ramifications of feudality, which could at any time be exerted to the injury of her son's Aquitanian dominions.

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[1] Edited by T. Stapleton, esq., F.A.S.

[2] Father and uncle of Hugh de Lusignan, Isabella's former betrothed.

[3] If Joanna had been born in 1203, as supposed, she would have been at this time seventeen, when her mother could not have used this plea.

[4] Niort, on the road from Poictiers to Rochefort, still shows the dower-castle here claimed by Isabella. It is thirteen miles from Poictiers, and but three or four from the famous castle of Lusignan. It still has two great donjons, each surrounded by eight tourelles. This feudal pile has been used as a prison for the last three centuries. D'Aubigné, madame de Maintenon's father, was imprisoned there for years; and that celebrated lady, if not born at Niort, passed the first years of her life within its walls.

"And so, an please you, deal with him, that, placed in power as he is, he may be with you, and not against you, for he can help you well, and he is well disposed to serve you faithfully, with all his power. And we are certain and undertake that he shall serve you well, if you will restore to him his rights, and therefore we advise you that you shall take opportune counsel in these matters. And when it shall please you, you may send for our daughter (Joanna), your sister, by a safe messenger and your letters-patent, and we will send her to you."

This notable epistle did not produce the desired effect of inducing young king Henry to surrender the Poitou dower-castle of Niort, the castles of Exeter and Rockingham, and still less the cash bequeathed by king John to his mother; which sum, we strongly suspect, was not in the coffers of the defunct, but he meant should be extracted from those of his subjects. As it was not forthcoming on this occasion, the count de la Marche commenced being as troublesome a neighbour to Poitou as his loving spouse had intimated he meant to be, if exasperated. On her own account she showed herself hostilely disposed, by detaining her young daughter when she was demanded by the English council. Yet it is very evident that she would have been glad to have got rid of the child, whom she had deprived of her elderly bridegroom.

The young king sent no satisfactory answer in return to the demand of the legacy and dower-castle of Niort; but only a letter, dated May 22, addressed "to the count de la Marche, who has married our mother, requiring him to come to England to treat with him on their affairs, and to send his young sister forthwith under safe-conduct to Rochelle, to be delivered to his officers, whom he has ordained to receive her."[1] Isabella, however, having ascertained that the council of her son's regency were anxious for the restoration of the little princess, in order to give her in marriage to the young king of Scots, Alexander II., and that a very desirable treaty of peace could not be ratified without the hand of her daughter, she took advantage of circumstances, and refused to give her up without the payments and surrenders previously specified. The count de la Marche forthwith commenced active measures of annoyance against the townsmen of Niort, whose letters to their sovereign, Henry king of England, are piteous in the extreme, full of complaints of being starved, plundered, and maltreated.[1] The young king then wrote to the pope, earnestly requesting him to excommunicate his mother and father-in-law: the latter he vituperated as a very Judas. Before the pope complied with this dutiful request, he inquired a little into the merits of the case, and found that Henry III. had deprived his royal mother of all, in England and Guienne, that appertained to her as the widow of king John, because she did not ask his leave to marry a second time; and as he was only fourteen, that was scarcely to be expected. After a most voluminous correspondence between the contending parties, on the king of Scots declaring he would not be pacified without a wife from the royal family of England, Henry was glad to make up the difference with his mother, by paying her arrears of jointure, and receiving from the count de la Marche the princess Joanna.[2]

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[1] Records of the Wakefield tower, Tower of London.—Fourth Report of Public Records. Report of T. Duffus Hardy, esq.

The king of France was the liege lord of count de la Marche, but the countess-queen was infuriated whenever she saw her husband arrayed against the territories of her son, and her sole study was, how French Poitou could be rendered independent of the king of France. "She was a queen,"[3] she said, "and she disdained to be the wife of a man who had to kneel before another." Another cause of violent irritation existed: prince Alphonso, the brother of the king of France, had refused to espouse her infant daughter by the count de la Marche, and married Jane of Thoulouse: on this occasion king Louis created his brother count of Poictiers, and required the count de la Marche, as possessor of Poitou, to do him homage. Isabella manifested great disdain at the heiress of Thoulouse[1] taking precedence of *her*, the crowned queen of England—mother, as she said, of a king and an empress. From that time she suffered the unfortunate count de la Marche to have no domestic peace, till he transferred his allegiance from Louis IX. to her son Henry III., who undertook the conquest of French Poitou at the instigation of his mother.

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[1] Records of the Wakefield tower, Tower of London.—Fourth Report of Public Records. Report of T. Duffus Hardy, esq.

[2] M. Paris. The princess was married to Alexander II. at York, Midsummer 1221. Though only eleven years of age, her marriages had already twice stopped a cruel war. She was surnamed by the English, Joan Makepeace. She died, when twenty-six, of a decline, produced by a change of climate. The king of Scots, at this pacification, received back his two sisters, who had been pledged to king John for a sum of money.

[3] Speed.

Several years of disastrous warfare ensued. The husband of Isabella nearly lost his whole patrimony, while the district of the Angoumois was overrun by the French.[2] After king Henry III. lost the battle of Taillebourg, fought on the banks of Isabella's native river, the sparkling Charente, in 1242, a series of defeats followed, which utterly dispossessed both the queen-mother and her husband of their territories. Henry III. fled to Bourdeaux, scarcely deeming himself safe in that city; while the queen-mother, whose pride had occasioned the whole catastrophe, had no resource but to deliver herself up to the mercy of the king of France. The count de la Marche had fought like a lion, but his valour availed little when the minds of his people were against the war. In this dilemma the countess-queen and her lord determined to send their heir, the young Hugh de Lusignan, to see how king Louis seemed disposed towards them. That amiable monarch received the son of his enemies with such benevolence, that the count de la Marche, taking his wife and the rest of the children with him to the camp of St. Louis, threw themselves at his feet, and were very kindly received,—on no worse conditions than doing homage to prince Alphonso for three castles.

Two years afterwards the life of king Louis was attempted, the first time by poison, the second time by the poniard. The last assassin was detected: he confessed that he had been suborned by Isabella. A congress was held by Louis in the neighbourhood of Poitou, where he laid before the prelates and the peers of the southern borders the proofs of the turpitude which had emanated from the family of the count de la Marche. The king wished to hold this consultation before he charged with crime a potentate as high in the ranks of the feudal chivalry as the head of the house of Lusignan,—for the unfortunate count de la Marche was supposed to be the instigator of his wife. Isabella, deeming that her sacred station as an anointed queen had prevented all imputation on her conduct, showed the greatest effrontery on the occasion.[1] She affected to believe that the congress was a mere effort of party malice towards her lord; accordingly she summoned all her retainers and attendants, and mounting her horse, rode to the court of inquiry. Either she was not permitted to enter, or her conscience suggested such proceeding might not be quite safe; but she scandalized all beholders by sitting on horseback[2] at the door of the court while the inquiry went on. Such proceeding would have been heroic had she been innocent; but as it was, it merely showed her daring disposition. Isabella either saw some witness enter who staggered her resolution, or she heard rumours which convinced her that her wickedness was discovered, for suddenly she passed from the height of audacity to the depths of despair. She fled homewards; and when the news came that the assembled peers and prelates considered there were grounds for judicial process, she threw herself into transports of fury, tore her *guimpe*[3] and her hair, and snatching her dagger, would have plunged it into her breast, if it had not been wrested from her hand.[4]

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[1] Recueil de Tillet, 1241.

[2] M. Paris.

Isabella's access of rage brought on a severe illness, rather fortunately for her at that crisis. It gave some colour to her subsequent escape into her son's dominions: she affected to seek medical advice, but she really sought refuge at the same time at his royal abbey of Fontevraud. The Benedictine ladies gave her shelter in those apartments which were set apart for any members of their royal benefactor's family who were sick or penitent,—laden with ills of body or soul. No one could be more indisposed in both than Isabella of Angoulême, nor did she feel any security until she was enclosed in that retreat called 'the secret chamber of Fontevraud.'[1] Matthew Paris observes, "that here she lived at her ease, though the Poictevins and French, considering her as the origin of the disastrous war with France, called her by no other name than Jezebel, instead of her rightful appellation of Isabel." He adds, "that the whole brunt of this disgraceful business fell upon her unfortunate husband and son. They were seized, and about to be tried on this accusation of poisoning, when count de la Marche made appeal to battail, and offered to prove in combat with his accuser Alphonso, brother to St. Louis, that his wife was belied." Alphonso, who appears to have had no great stomach to the fray, declined it, on the plea that count Hugh was so "treason-spotted" it would be pollution to fight with him. Then Isabella's young son Hugh dutifully offered to fight in the place of his sire, and Alphonso actually appointed the day and place to meet him; nevertheless, he again withdrew, excusing himself on the plea of the infamy of the family. "This sad news," says old Matthew, "for evil tidings hasten fast, soon reached the ears of Isabella in the secret chamber of Fontevraud." The affront offered to her brave young son broke the heart of Isabella. She never came out of 'the secret chamber' again, but, assuming the veil, died of a decay brought on by grief, in the year 1246.

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[1] Guillaume de Nangis. [2] French Chronicle, quoted by M. Michelet.

[3] *Wimple.* This is an article of female head-gear, which occasions long and serious disputes among our brother antiquaries; but we hope that the portrait of Isabella will settle the pattern of it to their general satisfaction. For they will own, that Isabella could not have torn her wimple without she had worn one, and fashions did not change in those days oftener than once in a quarter of a century, as the beautiful enamelled statues at Fontevraud will very well prove.

[4] French Chronicle, quoted by Vatout, Hist. of Eu.

As a penance for her sins, she desired to be buried humbly in the common cemetery at Fontevraud. Some years afterwards her son, Henry III., visiting the tombs of his ancestors at Fontevraud, was shocked at being shown the lowly grave of his mother: he raised for her a stately tomb, with a fine enamelled statue, in the choir at Fontevraud, near Henry II. and Eleanora of Aquitaine, her mother-in-law.[2] Her statue is of fine proportions, clad in flowing garments of the royal blue of France figured with gold, and confined to the waist by a girdle. She wears the wimple and the veil. Her face is oval, with regular and majestic features.[3]

[1] Matthew Paris. Guillaume de Nangis. Recueil de Tillet.

[2] Matthew of Westminster.

[3] The state of the royal effigies at Fontevraud in the present century is thus described in Stothard's Monumental Antiquities, by the admirable pen of Mrs.

The count de la Marche survived his unhappy partner but till the year 1249. The enmity between him and the family of St. Louis entirely disappeared after the death of Isabella; for her husband shared the crusade that the king of France made to Damietta, and fell, covered with wounds, in one of the eastern battles, fighting by the side of his old antagonist, Alphonso count of Poictiers.[1] Isabella left several children by this marriage,—five sons, and at least three daughters. Her eldest son by the count de la Marche succeeded, not only to his father's domains, but to his mother's patrimony of the Angoumois.

The count de la Marche sent all his younger sons, with his daughter Alice, to Henry III., who provided for them with reckless profusion, to the indignation of his English subjects. The names of his half-brothers are connected with most of the grievances of his troubled reign. The second son of queen Isabella and Marche was Guy de Lusignan, slain at the battle of Lewes; the third, William de Valence, earl of Pembroke, well known in English chronicle; the fourth, Aymer de Valence, bishop of Winchester.[2] The sons of Isabella derived their appellations from the places where she resided when she gave them birth; those called 'de Valence' were born at her lord's great citadel of that name, and the others at his more celebrated feudal castle of Lusignan.

Bray. "When Mr. Stothard first visited France, during the summer of 1816, he came direct to Fontevraud to ascertain if the effigies of our ancient kings who were buried there were to be seen. He found the abbey converted into a prison, and discovered in a cellar belonging to it the effigies of Henry II., his queen Eleanora of Aquitaine, Richard I., and Isabella of Angoulême. The chapel where the figures were placed previous to the Revolution was entirely destroyed, and these invaluable effigies then removed to a cellar, where they were exposed to constant mutilation from the prisoners who came to draw water from a well twice every day. It appeared they had sustained severe injury, as Mr. Stothard found the broken fragments scattered round. He made drawings of the figures, and upon his return to England suggested to our government the propriety of obtaining possession of these interesting relics, that they might be placed among the rest of our royal effigies in Westminster-abbey. The application succeeded in calling the attention of the French government towards these remains, and preserving them from total destruction."

[1] Montfaucon, who gives the date of his death 1249.

[2] Speed's Chronicle. He mentions a fifth son, Geoffrey de Lusignan, lord of Hastings, whom we believe to be identical with Guy.

ELEANOR OF PROVENCE,

SURNAMED LA BELLE,

QUEEN OF HENRY III.

CHAPTER I.

Eleanor of Provence—Parentage—Birth—Talents—Poem written by her—Her beauty—Henry accepts Eleanor without dowry—Escorted to England—Married at Canterbury—Crowned at Westminster—Costume and jewels—Henry's attention to dress—Rapacity of the queen's relatives—Birth of her eldest son—Paintings in her chambers—Attempt on the king's life—Eleanor rules the king—Birth of her eldest daughter—Queen accompanies the king to Guienne—Birth of the princess Beatrice—Return to England—Turbulence of Eleanor's uncle—Eleanor's second son born—King and queen robbed on the highway—Eleanor's unpopularity in London—Dower—Eleanor's mother—King pawns plate and jewels—Marriage of princess Margaret—Projected crusade—Eleanor appointed queen-regent—King's departure for Guienne—Makes his will—Bequeaths royal power to Eleanor—Princess Katherine born—Her early death.

Eleanor of Provence was perhaps the most unpopular queen that ever presided over the court of England. She was unfortunately called to share the crown and royal dignity of a feeble-minded sovereign at an earlier age than any of her predecessors, for at the time of her marriage with king Henry she had scarcely completed her fourteenth year,[1] a period of life when her education was imperfect, her judgment unformed, and her character precisely that of a spoiled child, of precocious beauty and genius,—perilous gifts! which in her case served but to foster vanity and self-sufficiency.

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[1] M. Paris.

[illegible]

ndon, Henry Colburn, 1851.

This princess was the second of the five beautiful daughters of Berenger, count of Provence, the grandson of Alfonso king of Arragon. Berenger was the last and most illustrious of the royal Provençal counts; and even had he not been the sovereign of the land of song, his own verses would have entitled him to a distinguished rank among the troubadour poets.[1] His consort Beatrice, daughter of Thomas count of Savoy, was scarcely less celebrated for her learning and literary powers.[2] From her accomplished parents the youthful Eleanor inherited both a natural taste and a practical talent for poetry, which the very air she breathed tended to foster and encourage. Almost before she entered her teens, she had composed an heroic poem in her native Provençal tongue, which is still in existence, and is to be found in MS. in the royal library at Turin.[3] The composition of this romance was the primary cause to which the infanta Eleanor of Provence owed her elevation to the crown-matrimonial of England. Her father's major-domo and confidant, Romeo, was the person to whose able management count Berenger was indebted for his success in matching his portionless daughters with the principal potentates of Europe.[4] The following steps taken by young Eleanor, were probably prompted by this sagacious counsellor. She sent to Richard earl of Cornwall, Henry III.'s brother, the fine Provençal romance, of her own inditing,[1] on the adventures of Blandin of Cornwall, and Guillaume of Miremas his companion, who undertook great perils for the love of the princess Briende and her sister Irlonde, (probably Britain and Ireland,) dames of incomparable beauty.

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[1] Sismondi's Literature of the South.

[2] According to some writers, she was the friend and correspondent of Richard Cœur de Lion; and it has been generally supposed that the concluding verse *Envoye*, in his celebrated prison-poem beginning "Comtesse," is addressed to this lady, to whom also he is said to have sent a copy of his sonnets.—Sismondi and J. P. Andrews.

[3] Nostradamus, Hist. of Troubadours.

[4] Crescembini. Romeo is mentioned by Dante as one of the greatest Italian poets of his time; he was tutor to Eleanor and her sister Marguerite. Far from reaping any benefit for himself from his faithful and successful match-making in behalf of his patron's daughters, Dante tells us that Romeo experienced the proverbial ingratitude of princes, and was driven from the court in disgrace in his old age. We take leave to note the pathetic lines which record the fact:—

"Four daughters, and each one of them a queen,
Had Raymond Berenger; this grandeur all
By poor Romeo had accomplished been.
Yet, moved by slanderers, tongues of evil men,
To short account this just one did he call,
Who rendered back full twelve for every ten:
He left the palace worn with age, and poor."—*Wright's Dante.*

Richard of Cornwall, to whom the young infanta sent, by way of a courtly compliment,[2] a poem so appropriately furnished with a paladin of Cornwall for a hero, was then at Poitou, preparing for a crusade, in which he hoped to emulate his royal uncle and namesake, Richard I. He was highly flattered by the attention of the young princess, who was so celebrated for her personal charms that she was called Eleanor la Belle; but as it was out of his power to testify his grateful sense of the honour by offering his hand and heart to the royal Provençal beauty in return for her romantic rhymes, he being already the husband of one good lady, (the daughter of the great earl-protector Pembroke,) he obligingly recommended her to his brother Henry III. for a queen. That monarch, whose share of personal advantages was but small, and whose learning and imaginativeness far exceeded his wit and judgment, had been disappointed in no less than five attempts to enter the holy pale of matrimony, with as many different princesses. He would fain have espoused a princess of Scotland, whose eldest sister had married his great minister Hubert de Burgh;[3] but his nobles, from jealousy of Hubert, dissuaded him from this alliance.[4] He then vainly sued for a consort in the courts of Bretagne, Austria, and Bohemia. At length, wholly dispirited by his want of success in every matrimonial negotiation into which he had entered, the royal Cœlebs, having arrived at the age of twenty-five, began, no doubt, to imagine himself devoted to a life of single blessedness, and remained four years without further attempts to provide himself with a queen.

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[1] Lives of the Troubadours, by Nostradamus, who very stupidly mistakes Richard earl of Cornwall for his uncle Cœur de Lion; but Fauriel has, in the Revue des Deux Mondes, satisfactorily explained the blunder.

[2] The poem written by the princess Eleanor bears marks of its origin, being precisely the sort of composition that a child, or young girl of some genius and little literary experience, might have composed. It was not without celebrity in her native country, where it is yet remembered. Probably the young Eleanor received some assistance from her mother and father, as the countess Beatrice and the count Berenger were both poets of great popularity in the Provençal dialect.—Fauriel, Revue des Deux Mondes.

[3] It was reported to king Henry, by Hubert's jealous foes, that he had dissuaded a lady from fulfilling her engagement with the king, by telling her "that Henry was a squint-eyed fool, a lewd man, a leper, deceitful, perjured, more faint-hearted than a woman, and utterly unfit for the company of any fair or noble lady."—Articles of Impeachment; Speed.

[4] Rapin.

In 1235, however, he again took courage, and offered his hand to Joanna, the daughter of the earl of Ponthieu; and having, for the first time in his life, received a favourable answer to his proposals, a contract of marriage with this lady was signed, and ambassadors despatched for the pope's dispensation; but when they were within a few days' journey of Rome, he sent word that he had altered his mind, and charged them not to proceed.[1] This sudden change of purpose was occasioned by the agreeable impression Henry had received from his brother, Richard earl of Cornwall, of the beauty and brilliant genius of his fair correspondent, Eleanor of Provence.[2]

As soon as Henry thought proper to make known to his court that he had broken his engagement with the maid of Ponthieu, his nobles, according to Hemmingford, were so obliging as to recommend him to marry the very lady on whom he had secretly fixed his mind. As Louis IX. of France (afterwards styled St. Louis) was married to Eleanor's eldest sister, the infanta Marguerite of Provence, Henry's counsellors were of opinion that great political advantages might be derived from this alliance. The matrimonial treaty was opened June 1235. Henry discreetly made choice of three sober priests, for his procurators at the court of count Berenger,[3]—the bishops of Ely and Lincoln, and the prior of Hurle: to these were added the master of the Temple. Though Henry's age more than doubled that of the fair maid of Provence, of whose charms and accomplishments he had received such favourable reports, and he was aware that the poverty of the generous count her father was almost proverbial, yet the king's constitutional covetousness impelled him to demand the enormous portion of twenty thousand marks with this fairest flower of the land of roses and sweet song.

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[1] Matthew Paris. Matthew of Westminster. Rapin.

[2] We find in Rymer's Fœdera, about this period, a letter written by Henry III. to the earl Savoy, brother to the countess Beatrice, Eleanor's mother, entreating his friendly assistance in bringing about the marriage.

[3] Rymer's Fœdera.

Count Berenger, in reply, objected on the part of his daughter, to the very inadequate dower Henry would be able to settle upon her during the life of his mother, queen Isabella. Henry, on this, proceeded to lower his demands from one sum to another, till finding that the impoverished but high-spirited Provençal count was inclined to resent his sordid manner of bargaining for the nuptial portion,[1] and being seriously alarmed lest he should lose the lady, he in a great fright wrote to his ambassadors, "to conclude the marriage forthwith, either with money or without; but at all events to secure the lady for him, and conduct her safely to England without delay." After the contract was signed, Henry wrote both to the count and countess of Provence, requesting them "to permit the nuptials of Eleanor to be postponed till the feast of St. Martin, and to explain to their daughter that such was his wish."[2]

Eleanor was dowered in the reversion of the queen-mother Isabella of Angoulême's dower, whose jointure is recapitulated in the marriage-treaty between Henry and his future consort; but no immediate settlement is specified for the young queen. The royal bride, having been delivered with due solemnity to king Henry's ambassadors, commenced her journey to England. She was attended on her progress by all the chivalry and beauty of the south of France, a stately train of nobles, ladies, minstrels, and jongleurs, with crowds of humbler followers. Eleanor was treated with peculiar honours by Thibaut, the poet-king of Navarre, who feasted her and her company for five days, and guarded them in person, with all his knights and nobles, to the French frontier. There she was met and welcomed by her eldest sister, the consort of that most amiable and virtuous of kings, St. Louis; and, after receiving the congratulations of these illustrious relatives, she embarked for England, landed at Dover, and, on the 4th of January, 1236, was married to king Henry III. at Canterbury by the archbishop, St. Edmund of Canterbury.[1]

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[1] In his private instructions to John, the son of Philip, his seneschal, and to his procurators, Henry by a postscript subjoins the following scale of progressive abatements, which he empowers his trusty and well-beloved to make from his first demand of 20,000 marks: 15,000—10,000—7,000—5,000—3,000 marcarum. —Rymer's Fœdera. It is by no means certain that even the paltry minimum here named by the royal calculator was obtained.

[2] These letters are dated the 10th of October, 1235.

Piers of Langtoft gives us the following description of the royal bride:—

> "Henry, our king, at Westminster took to wife
> The earl's daughter of Provence, the fairest May in life;
> Her name is Elinor, of gentle nurture;
> Beyond the sea there was no such creature."

All contemporary chronicles, indeed, whether in halting English rhymes or sonorous Latin prose,—to say nothing of the panegyrical strains of her countrymen, the Provençal poets,—are agreed in representing this princess as well deserving the surname of 'la Belle.'

King Henry conducted his youthful consort to London in great pride, attended by a splendid train of nobility and ecclesiastics, who had accompanied the sovereign to Canterbury in order to assist at his nuptials. Preparations of the most extraordinary magnificence were made for the approaching coronation of the newly-wedded queen, which was appointed to take place on the feast of St. Fabian and St. Sebastian, six days only after the bridal, being the 20th of January. Previous to that august ceremony Henry had caused great improvements to be made in the palace of Westminster for the reception of his young consort. There is a precept, in the twentieth year of his reign, directing "that the king's great chamber at Westminster be painted a good green colour, like a curtain: that, in the great gable or frontispiece of the said chamber a French inscription should be painted, and that the king's little wardrobe should also be painted of a green colour, to imitate a curtain." The queen's chamber was beautified and adorned with historical paintings at the same time.

The Saturday before the queen was crowned, Henry laid the first stone of the Lady-chapel, in Westminster-abbey. We read also that the good citizens of London, in their zealous desire of doing honour to their new queen, set about the scarcely less than Herculean labour of cleansing their streets from mud, and all other offensive accumulations, with which they were, at that season of the year, rendered almost impassable. This laudable purification, which must have been regarded almost as a national blessing, being happily effected, the loyal citizens prepared all sorts of costly pageantry, before unheard of, to grace the coronation-festival, and delight the young queen.

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[1] M. Paris.

Eleanor was just at the happy age for enjoying the spectacle of all the gay succession of brave shows and dainty devices so elegantly detailed by Matthew Paris, who, after describing streets hung with different-coloured silks, garlands, and banners, and with lamps, cressets, and other lights at night, concludes by saying,—"But why need I recount the train of those who performed the offices of the church? why describe the profusion of dishes which furnished the table, the abundance of venison, the variety of fish, the diversity of wine, the gaiety of the jugglers, the comeliness of the attendants? Whatever the world could produce for glory or delight, was there conspicuous."

The most remarkable feature in the coronation of Eleanor of Provence must have been the equestrian procession of the citizens of London, who, on that occasion, claimed the office of cellarers to the king of England. The claim of his loyal citizens having been wisely granted, they venturously mounted swift horses, and rode forth to accompany the king and queen from the Tower, clothed in long garments, embroidered with gold and silk of divers colours. They amounted to the number of three hundred and sixty. Their steeds were finely trapped in array, with shining bits and new saddles, each citizen bearing a gold or silver cup in his hand for the royal use, the king's trumpeters sounding before them; and so rode they in at the royal banquet, (better riders, belike, were they than the men who wear long gowns in the city of London in these degenerate days,) and served the king and that noble company with wine, according to their duty.[1] The mayor of London, Andrew Buckerel the pepperer, headed this splendid civic cavalcade, and claimed the place of master Michael Belot, the deputy of Albini earl of Arundel, the grand boteler or pincerna of England; but he was repulsed by order of the king, who said, "No one ought by right to perform that service but master Michael." The mayor submitted to the royal decision in this matter of high ceremonial, and served the two bishops at the king's right hand.[1] After the banquet, the earl-boteler received the cup out of which the king had drunk as a matter of right; and master Michael, his deputy, received the earl's robes. Gilbert de Sandford claimed, for the service of keeping the queen's chamber-door at this coronation, the queen's bed and all its furniture, as her chamberlain.[2] The barons of the Cinque-ports made their claim to carry, as usual, the canopy over the queen's head,—a right which was fruitlessly disputed by 'the marchers' of Wales. Alms were bounteously distributed to the poor on this occasion, king Henry, with all his faults, being one of the most charitable of princes.

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[1] Matthew Paris. City Record. Speed. As cellarers, they handed the wine to the royal butler.

The most sumptuous and splendid garments ever seen in England were worn at the coronation of the young queen of Henry III. The peaceful and vigorous administration of Pembroke and Hubert de Burgh had filled England with wealth and luxury, drawn from their commerce with the south of France. The citizens of London wore at this splendid ceremony garments called cyclades, a sort of upper robe, made not only of silk, but of velvet worked with gold. Henry III., who was the greatest fop in his dominions, did not, like king John, confine his wardrobe precepts to the adornment of his own person, but liberally issued benefactions of satin, velvet, cloth of gold, and ermine for the apparelling of his royal ladies. No homely dress of green cloth was ordered for the attire of his lovely queen; but when a mantle lined with ermine was made by his tailors for himself, another as rich was given out for Eleanor.

The elegant fashion of chaplets of gold and jewels, worn over the hair, was adopted by this queen, whose jewellery was of a magnificent order, and is supposed to have cost her doting husband nearly 30,000*l.*—an enormous sum, if reckoned according to the value of our money. Eleanor had no less than nine guirlands, or chaplets,[1] for her hair, formed of gold filagree and clusters of coloured precious stones. For state occasions she had a great crown, most glorious with gems, worth 1500*l.* at that era; her girdles were worth 5000 marks, and the coronation present given by her sister, queen Marguerite of France, was a large silver peacock, whose train was set with sapphires and pearls, and other precious stones, wrought with silver. This elegant piece of jewellery was used as a reservoir for sweet waters, which were forced out of its beak into a basin of chased silver.

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[1] Speed. City Records.

[2] As the citizens of London had claimed the service of the butlery, so those of Winchester claimed that of the royal kitchen; but the doings of the men of Winchester, in the capacity of cook's assistants, have not been recorded. The cloth that hung behind the king's table was claimed, on the one side by the door-keepers, and on the other by the scullions, as their perquisite.

Henry III. was the first prince who wore the costly material called baudekins: arrayed in a garment of this brilliant tissue of gold, he sat upon his throne and "glittered very gloriously"[2] at his bridal coronation. The expenses of this ceremonial were enormous. Henry expended the portion of his sister Isabella, just married to the emperor of Germany, for the purpose of defraying them.[3] When he petitioned the lords for a thirtieth of his subjects' property as a relief from his difficulties, they told him "they had amply supplied funds both for his marriage, and that of the empress; and as he had wasted the money, he might defray the expenses of his wedding as he could." Great offence was taken by the nation at the number of foreigners, especially Italians, who accompanied, or followed, queen Eleanor to England. Among these was her uncle, Peter of Savoy, one of the younger brothers of the countess of Provence. King Henry created him earl of Richmond, and, at the suit of the queen, bestowed upon him that part of London since called from him 'the Savoy.' Peter founded there a noble palace, which the queen, his niece, afterwards purchased of him for her son Edmund earl of Lancaster.[1]

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[1] See the elegant description of this kind of head-dress, in the Lay of Sir Launfel, written a few years after:

"Their heads were dight well, withal,
Each with a jolly coronal
With sixty gems or mo."

[2] Matthew Paris.

[3] Henry had indeed fitted his sister out with a sumptuous wardrobe, the details of which he had personally superintended, with a degree of minute attention to linings, trimmings, purflings, and garniture perfectly surprising in a male sovereign, but quite in accordance with the general frivolity of this monarch's character, and his taste for finery. He also favoured the officers of the wardrobe with a particular inventory of the dresses of the princess, and a description of the material and fashion of each, even to the *robe de chambre;* and having, by the extra pains for his sister's outward adornment, we suppose, satisfied his conscience, he appropriated the rest of her portion to his own use.—Rapin. Strutt's British Costume.

In the course of one short year the ascendancy which the uncle of his young queen gained over the plastic mind of Henry was so considerable, that the administration of the kingdom was entirely left to his discretion, and all the patronage of church and state passed through his hands. Richard earl of Cornwall, at that time the heir-presumptive to the throne, though greatly attached to the king his brother, reprobated Henry's conduct in permitting the intrusion and interference of the queen's foreign relatives and attendants; bidding his brother "follow the prudent example of their brother-in-law, the emperor, who, when he received their sister, the princess Isabella, sent back all her train of followers." The king of France, too, he reminded Henry, had taken the same course, when he married the elder sister of queen Eleanor.[2]

In the fourth year of her marriage Eleanor brought an heir to England. The young prince was born on the 16th of June, 1239, at Westminster, and received the popular name of Edward, in honour of Edward the Confessor; for whose memory Henry III. cherished the deepest veneration. The celebrated earl of Leicester[3] was one of the godfathers of prince Edward, and held him at the baptismal font: he was then in the height of favour, both with Eleanor and the king.

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[1] Pennant's London.

[2] M. Paris.

[3] Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, the third son of Simon count de Montfort, the sanguinary leader of the crusade against the Albigenses. He had served the office of seneschal, or high steward of the royal household, at the coronation of the queen: and this year Henry, with his own hand, secretly bestowed upon him his widowed sister, Eleanor countess of Pembroke, in St. Stephen's chapel, though the princess had vowed to become a nun. There were circumstances, it should seem, that rendered a hasty marriage necessary; and an enormous bribe from Henry purchased a dispensation for this marriage from the pope, the lady having taken the ring, but not the veil of a nun.—Matthew Paris. Speed. Rapin.

But the scene changed before the queen left her lying-in chamber; for when she gave a grand festival on occasion of her churching,[1] and the king summoned all the great ladies of the land to attend the queen to church, Leicester brought his newly wedded wife, the king's sister, to perform her devoir to Eleanor, but was received with a burst of fury by Henry, who called him "the seducer of his sister and an excommunicated man, and ordered his attendants to turn him out of the palace." Leicester endeavoured to remonstrate, but Henry would not hear him, and he was expelled, weeping with rage, and vowing vengeance against the queen, to whose influence he attributed this reverse.

Among many other proofs of attention paid by Henry to his young queen on the birth of his heir, we find that he ordered "the chamber behind her chapel, in his palace of Westminster, and the private chamber of that apartment, supposed to be Eleanor's dressing-room, to be freshly wainscoted and lined, and that a list or border should be made, well painted with images of our Lord and angels, with incense-pots scattered over the list or border." He also directed that the four Evangelists should be painted in the queen's chamber, and that a crystal vase should be made for keeping the relics he possessed.

A few curious particulars, illustrative of the interior of the ancient palace of our English kings at Woodstock, may be gathered from the following minute instructions contained in a precept[2] addressed by Henry III., in the 25th of his reign, to the keeper of that palace, directing him "to cause an extension of the iron trellises on the steps leading from our chamber to the *herbarium*, or garden;[3] also of the wooden lattices in two windows of our queen's chamber, and to cause a pent to be made over these windows, covered with lead; and an aperture to be made in the pent, between the hall and our queen's chamber and the chapel towards the borders of our herbarium, and two windows of white glass looking towards the said borders. Two spikes, also, in the gable of our hall, and windows of the same kind on the east of the hall, and the pictures now in the hall, are to be repaired. And we desire that all the courts, fountains, and walls of our houses there be repaired."

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[1] Sandford's Genealogies.

[2] Rot. Liberati, 25th of Henry III., m. 23.

[3] Gardening was by no means neglected in the reign of this prince; for Matthew Paris mentions "that the inclement year 1257 was a year of famine; that apples were scarce, and pears scarce; but that figs and cherries, plums and all kinds of fruit included in shells, had totally failed." Several of these fruits are afterwards named in our annals, as lately introduced, in the reign of Henry VIII.; but there is not a doubt that the civilization of England had greatly retrograded from the time of the Provençal queens. During the barbarous wars, from the reign of Henry V. to Richard III., England had lost many arts, even horticulture, for the fruits re-introduced in the reign of king Henry VIII. were undoubtedly cultivated in that of Henry III.

Independently of his noble taste in architecture, of which Westminster-abbey is a standing proof, Henry III. was undoubtedly possessed of a love for the fine arts; for we find, in the seventeenth year of his reign, a precept directed to the sheriff of Hampshire, commanding him to cause the king's wainscoted chamber in the castle of Winchester to be painted with Saxon histories, and the same pictures with which it had been painted before; which proves, not only that historical paintings in oil on wainscot were then in use, but that they had been painted so long that the colours were faded, and required renewing. Again, we have a precept of Henry III., twenty-three years after this period, which runs thus:—"Pay out of our treasury to Odo the goldsmith, and Edward his son, one hundred and seventeen shillings and ten-pence, for oil, varnish, and colours bought, and pictures made in the chamber of our queen at Westminster, between the octaves of Holy Trinity and the feast of St. Barnabas, the same year, in the twenty-third year of our reign."[1]

This reign affords the first example of a poet-laureate, in the person of one master Henry, to whom, by the appellation of "our beloved versificator,"[2] the king orders "one hundred shillings to be given in payment of his arrears." This officer was, in all probability, introduced into the royal household by the Provençal queen, who was, as we have seen, herself a poet, and who had been accustomed in her early youth to be surrounded by minstrels and troubadours in the literary court of her accomplished parents. Fauriel points out several romances written under the superintendence of this king, who, when he married Eleanor of Provence, received a partner whose tastes and pursuits certainly assimilated with his own; and to this circumstance may, no doubt, be attributed the unbounded influence she acquired over his mind, which she retained long after the bloom of youth and beauty had passed away.

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[1] Walpole's Anecdotes of Painting. Strutt.

[2] Madox, Hist. of the Exchequer.

While the king and queen were still residing at the palace of Woodstock, about three months after the birth of their heir, an attempt was made on the life of the king by a mad poet named Ribald, or Ribaut, who, according to some of the chroniclers, was a gentleman and a knight.[1] One day he rushed into the royal presence, and, before the whole court, called upon Henry to resign the crown, which he had usurped and so long detained from him. The officers of the household forced him out of the presence-chamber, and would have inflicted a severe chastisement upon him, if the kind-hearted monarch had not interposed, and charged them "not to hurt a man who talked so like a person out of his senses." The king told them "to take him into his hall, and entertain him hospitably, and let him go." This was done, and Ribaut got into high spirits, and began to be very amusing to the royal retinue, joculating for their entertainment, and singing some choice minstrelsy.[2] Thus he whiled away the time till dark, when he stole into the king's bedchamber through a window, armed with a long sharp knife, and concealed himself among the rushes under the king's bed. Henry, fortunately for himself, passed that night in the queen's chamber, and Ribaut, rising up at midnight, stabbed the bolster of the royal bed several times, searching for the king in vain, and demanding where he was in a loud roaring voice; which so alarmed Margaret Bisset, one of the queen's maids of honour, who was sitting up late, reading a devout book by the light of a lamp, that her shrieks awakened the king's servants, who took him into custody. The unhappy creature was executed at Coventry for this offence.[3]

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[1] Speed. M. Paris.

[2] Wikes.

[3] In these days he would have been, with more propriety, consigned to an asylum for lunatics. The expression of "ribald rhymes" was, no doubt, derived from the name of this frantic versifier of the thirteenth century.

The following year two other uncles of the queen, Thomas count of Savoy, and Boniface, his younger brother, visited England.[1] King Henry, out of complaisance to his consort received and entertained them with such magnificence, that not knowing how to support the charge by honest means, he sent word to the Jews that, unless they presented him with twenty thousand marks, he should expel them all the kingdom; and thus he supplied himself with money for his unjust generosity.

The death of St. Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury, furnished Henry with a further opportunity of obliging Eleanor, by obtaining the nomination of her uncle Boniface to the primacy of England. Matthew of Westminster informs us that Eleanor wrote, with her own hand, a very elegant epistle to the pope in his behalf; "taking upon herself," says the worthy chronicler, (who appears to have been highly scandalized at female interference in ecclesiastical affairs,) "for no other reason than his relationship to her, to urge the cause of this unsuitable candidate in the warmest manner. And so," continues he, "my lord the pope, when he had read the letter, thought proper to name this man, who had been chosen by a woman; and it was commonly said that he was chosen by female intrigue." Among other proofs of Eleanor's unbounded influence over the mind of her lord, it was observed, that when, on the death of Gilbert Mareschal, earl of Pembroke, his brother Walter demanded of the king the office of earl marshal, which was hereditary in his family, Henry at first in a great passion denied him, telling him "that his two brothers were a pair of turbulent traitors, and that he had presumed to attend a tournament at which he had forbidden him to be present." Yet, when the earl, having succeeded in interesting queen Eleanor in his favour, again preferred his suit, it was immediately granted through her powerful intercession.[2]

Queen Eleanor presented her husband with a daughter in the year 1241, who was named Margaret, after her royal aunt, the queen of France. The following year, queen Eleanor, accompanied the king her husband on his ill-advised expedition against her brother-in-law, the king of France[1] with whom that peace-loving monarch had suffered himself to be involved in a quarrel, to oblige his mother, Isabella of Angoulême.[2] The king and queen embarked at Portsmouth, May 19, 1242. Henry was totally unsuccessful in his attacks on the king of France, and, after a series of defeats,[3] took refuge with his queen at Bourdeaux, to the great scandal of all his English knights and nobles, many of whom returned home in disgust, which Henry revenged in the usual way, by fining their estates. Eleanor gave birth to another daughter at Bourdeaux, whom she named Beatrice, after her mother, the countess of Provence.[4]

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[1] M. Paris. Polydore Vergil. Speed.

[2] M. Paris.

In consequence of the close connexion between their queens, Louis IX. was induced to grant a truce of five years to his vanquished foe. Henry and Eleanor then resolved to spend a merry winter at Bourdeaux, where they amused themselves with as much feasting and pageantry as if Henry had obtained the most splendid victories, although he was much impoverished by losing his military chest, and his moveable chapel-royal, with all its rich plate, at the battle of Taillebourg. When Henry and Eleanor returned to England, they landed at Portsmouth, and orders were issued that the principal inhabitants of every town on the route to London should testify their loyal affection, by coming forth on horseback in their best array, to meet and welcome their sovereign and his queen.[5]

During the residence of the royal family on the continent, queen Eleanor strengthened her interest by bringing about a union between her youngest sister Cincia, or Sancha, and the king's brother, Richard earl of Cornwall, who had recently become a widower. The marriage was solemnized in England, whither the countess of Provence conducted the affianced bride in the autumn of the same year. Henry called upon the Jews to furnish the funds for the splendid festivities which he thought proper to ordain, in honour of the nuptials between his brother and the sister of his queen. One Jew alone, the rich Aaron of York, was compelled to pay no less than four hundred marks of gold, and four thousand of silver; and the Jews of London were mulcted in like proportion. The dinner at this bridal consisted of thirty thousand dishes. The countess of Provence, not contented with the splendour of her entertainment, thought proper, before she departed, to borrow four thousand marks of the king for the use of her husband. "The king," says the chroniclers of that day, "thought he never could do enough to testify his love for the queen and her family."[1]

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[1] M. Westminster. Rapin.
[2] See the preceding biography.
[3] M. Paris. Rapin.
Ibid.
[5] Speed.

The misconduct of Eleanor's uncles, and their unfitness for the high and responsible situation in which they were placed in England, may be gathered from the following disgraceful fracas, which took place between the archbishop Boniface and the monks of St. Bartholomew. In the year 1244, Boniface, archbishop of Canterbury, thought proper to intrude himself in the bishop of London's diocese, on a visitation to the priory of St. Bartholomew. The monks, though they liked not his coming, received him with respect, and came out in solemn procession to meet him; but the archbishop said "he came not to receive honour, but for the purposes of ecclesiastical visitation." On this the monks replied, "that having a learned bishop of their own, they ought not to be visited by any other." This answer was so much resented by the wrathful primate, that he smote the sub-prior on the face, exclaiming, in his ungoverned fury, "Indeed, indeed! doth it become ye English traitors thus to withstand me?" and, with oaths not proper to repeat, he tore the rich cope of the sub-prior to pieces and trampled it under his feet, and thrust him against a pillar of the chancel with such violence, that he had well-nigh slain him. The monks seeing their sub-prior thus maltreated, pushed the archbishop back, and in so doing discovered that he was cased in armour, and prepared for battle. The archbishop's attendants, who were all Provençals to a man, then fell on the monks, whom they beat, buffeted, and trampled under foot. The monks, in their rent and miry garments, ran to show their wounds and to complain of their wrongs to their bishop, who bade them go and tell the king thereof. The only four who were capable of getting as far as Westminster proceeded to the palace in a doleful plight; but the king would neither see them, nor receive their complaint.[1] The populace of London were, however, in great indignation, and were disposed to tear the archbishop to pieces, pursuing him all the way to Lambeth with execrations, crying aloud, "Where is this ruffian,—this cruel smiter? He is no winner of souls, but an exacter of money,—a stranger born, unlearned, and unlawfully elected." Boniface fled over to the palace, where he made his story good with the king through the influence of the queen, his niece, and the monks of St. Bartholomew got no redress.

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[1] M. Paris.

The following year, 1244, the threatened war between England and Scotland was averted by a contract of marriage, in which the hand of the eldest daughter of Henry and Eleanor, the infant lady Margaret, was pledged to the heir of Scotland, the eldest son of Alexander II.[2] About this time Henry ordered all the poor children from the streets and highways round Windsor and its neighbourhood, to be collected and munificently feasted in the great hall of the palace there. Afterwards the royal children were all publicly weighed, and their weight in silver distributed in alms among the destitute individuals present, for the good of the souls of the princely progeny of himself and queen Eleanor.

In the beginning of the year 1245, the queen bore a second son, prince Edmund, and the king levied a fine of fifteen hundred marks on the city of London, under pretence that they had sheltered one Walter Bukerel, whom he had banished. Henry was encouraged in his unconstitutional proceedings by a very trivial circumstance. A fire broke out in the pope's palace, and destroyed the chamber in which the principal deed of Magna Charta was kept, which made the queen fancy that it was rendered null and void.[3] England was at this period in such a state of misrule, that in Hampshire no jury dared to find a bill against any plunderer; nor was the system of universal pillage confined to the weak and undefended, since Matthew Paris declares "king Henry complained to him, that when he was travelling with the queen through that county, their luggage was robbed, their wine drunk, and themselves insulted by the lawless rabble." Such was the insurgent state of Hampshire, that king Henry could find no judge or justiciary who would undertake to see the laws duly executed. In this dilemma he was forced to sit on the bench of justice himself in Winchester-castle; and no doubt the causes determined by him, and his manner of declaring judgment, would have been well worth the attention of modern reporters. While thus presiding personally on the King's-bench, Henry had occasion to summon lord Clifford to answer at this justice-seat for some malefaction; when the turbulent misdoer not only contumaciously refused his attendance, but forced the king's officer to eat the royal warrant, seal and all![1] Henry punished him with spirit and courage.

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[1] M. Westminster. [2] M. Paris. M. Westminster. [3] M. Paris.

One great cause of the queen's unpopularity in Lodnon originated from the unprincipled manner in which she exercised her influence to compel all vessels freighted with corn, wool, or any peculiarly valuable cargo, to unlade their cargoes at her hithe, or quay, called Queen-hithe; because at that port (the dues of which formed a part of the revenues of the queen-consorts of England) the tolls were paid according to the value of the lading.[2] This arbitrary mode of proceeding was without parallel on the part of her predecessors, and was considered as a serious grievance by the masters of vessels and merchants in general.[3] At last Eleanor, for a certain sum of money, sold her rights in this quay to her brother-in-law, Richard earl of Cornwall, who, for a quit-rent of fifty pounds per annum, let it as a fee-farm to John Gisors, the mayor of London, for the sake of putting an end to the perpetual disputes between the merchants of London and the queen. In order to annoy the citizens of London, Henry, during the disputes regarding the queen's gold, revived the old Saxon custom of convening folkmotes;[4] and by this means reminded the commons, as the great body of his subjects were called, that they had a political existence no less than the barons of

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[1] Regal Annals, quoted by Speed.

[2] Harrison's Survey of London.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

England,—and they never again forgot it. Modern writers have asserted, that there was no middle class in the days of the Plantagenets: what, then, may we ask, were the citizens of London, those munificent and high-spirited merchants, whose wealth so often in this reign excited the cupidity of the court? If the conduct of the king and queen towards this class of their subjects had been guided by a more enlightened policy, they might have found in their loyal affection no trivial support against Leicester and the disaffected aristocracy of England; but, excited by the rapacity of Eleanor, the king pillaged and outraged the citizens, till they threw their weight into the scale of the mighty adversary of the monarchy.

Queen Eleanor was somewhat relieved from her pecuniary difficulties by the death of the queen-mother, Isabella, in 1246. She was put, after this event, in full possession of the dower-lands appointed for the English queens; she, however, appropriated her replenished purse to the use of her mother, who, now a widow, paid another visit to England, to the great indignation of Henry. The king was discontented at the manner in which count Berenger had disposed of Provence, to the exclusion of his eldest daughters. He was, besides, very little able to afford gifts to his wife's mother, since he had not at that very time wherewithal to meet his household expenses. He was advised, as the parliament refused to assist him with more money, to raise the sum required to satisfy his clamorous creditors by selling his plate and jewels. "But where shall I find purchasers, if money be so scarce?" demanded the king. "In the city of London," was the reply. On this, Henry petulantly observed, "If the treasures of Augustus Cæsar were in the market, the city of London would purchase them, I suppose. Those clownish citizens, who call themselves barons, are an inexhaustible treasury in themselves."[1] With the determination of participating in some of this envied wealth, Henry and Eleanor thought proper to keep the Christmas of 1248 in the city of London, and extorted presents from the most liberal of the leading men there, to the amount of upwards of two thousand marks.[1] This was, however, far from satisfying the royal visitors. Henry complained that he had not been treated with sufficient respect, and to testify his displeasure, proclaimed a fair in Tothill-fields for the benefit of the men of Westminster, which was to last a fortnight; and during that period he forbade the citizens of London to open their shops for any sort of traffic, to the great injury of trade.[2]

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[1] M. Paris. Speed.

The extreme straits to which the king and queen were at times reduced for the money they profusely lavished, may be gathered from the fact, that in the twenty-seventh year of his reign, Henry, being without the means of paying the officers of the chapel-royal at Windsor, issued an order to John Mansel, directing him "to pawn the most valuable image of the Virgin Mary for the sum required, but under especial condition that this hallowed pledge be deposited in a decent place."[3] In the year 1249, the royal coffers being entirely exhausted, and the parliament refusing to grant any aid, Henry proceeded to practise the degrading expedient of soliciting loans and gifts of every person of condition who entered his presence, assuring them, "That it would be a greater act of charity to bestow money on him, than on those who went from door to door begging an alms."[4]

The king and queen were next seized with an unwonted fit of economy, and not only forbore to make expensive grants and donations, but put all their servants on short allowance, abridged their wages, and refused to disburse any of the gratuities which the kings and queens of England had been accustomed to bestow. They ceased to put on their royal robes,[5] and, to save the expense of keeping a table, they daily invited themselves, with their son prince Edward, and a chosen number of their foreign kindred or favourites, to dine with the rich men of the city of London, or the great men of the court, and manifested much discontent unless presented with costly gifts at their departure, which they took, not as obligations and proofs of loyal affection to their persons, but as

[1] Survey of London. [2] Stowe. [3] Madox. [4] M. Paris. [5] Speed.

matters of right. The cry of the land in this reign was against foreign influence and foreign oppression, and it was a proverb, that no one but a Provençal or a Poictevin had any hopes of advancement, either in the state or church; and which were held in the greatest abhorrence, the half-brothers of the king or the uncles of the queen, it was difficult to say.[1]

On St. Dunstan's-day, 1251, queen Eleanor's apartments in Windsor-castle were struck by lightning, and the chimney of the room where she and the royal children were, was thrown down by the violence of the shock, and reduced to dust.[2] In the parks many oaks were rent asunder and uprooted; mills with their millers, sheepfolds with their shepherds, and husbandmen in the fields, were, by the same awful storm, beaten to the earth and destroyed. The year, however, closed, more auspiciously than it commenced, with the espousals of the princess Margaret, the eldest daughter of Henry and Eleanor, then in her tenth year, to the young king of Scotland, Alexander III., who was about twelve. The nuptials were celebrated with great pomp at York, where the royal families of England and Scotland kept their Christmas together.

The youthful bridegroom was knighted by king Henry in York cathedral, on Christmas-day, in the presence of the whole court, and the next morning the marriage was solemnized at an early hour. Henry endeavoured to persuade the young Alexander to pay him homage for the realm of Scotland; but the princely boy excused himself with good address from the performance of this important ceremony,[1] by replying, that "He came to York to be married, not to discuss an affair on which he, being a minor, could determine nothing without consulting the states of his kingdom." Henry, finding his son-in-law was of so determined a spirit, could not find it in his heart to break up the nuptial festivities by insisting on his demand, especially as the archbishop of York had generously promised to be at the expense of all the entertainment, which cost him upwards of four thousand marks, "and six hundred oxen, which," says Matthew Paris, "were all consumed at one meal."[2]

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[1] A foreign historian declares that the language of the English was in this reign as barbarous as their manners. To add to other disquiets, there was a regular confusion of tongues, as in England no man rightly understood his neighbour. It was a mark of nobility and gentle breeding for people to converse in Norman-French, or in Provençal; and many affected these languages who knew them not. All the queen's court spoke Provençal: the law acknowledged no language but Norman-French; the church nothing but Latin; the people a corrupted Saxon: therefore, in addition to her other misfortunes, poor England had to endure the plagues of the tower of Babel. "Some," says a contemporary writer, "use strange gibbering, chattering, waffing, and grating; then the Northumbres tongue (and especially at York) is so sharp, flitting, froyting, and unshape, that we Southron men may not understand that language."–Trevisa. Here we see the different elements, out of which rose our English language, in an actual state of struggle and ferment. The long alliance with Provence certainly threw into the composition of the rising language its share of harmony and elegance, and the long reign of Eleanor of Provence, and her constant communication with her own country, aided this transfusion. It is a curious circumstance, that the proclamations to preserve the king's peace, or at least to make the endeavour, had to be read in three languages,—Saxon, French, and Latin.

[1] Stowe.

More worthy of remembrance, however, than these enormous devourings of the hospitable archbishop's beef, does the worthy chronicler consider the dignified and princely conduct of the youthful majesty of Scotland at his bridal feast, and the amiable manner in which he supplicated, on his knees, with clasped hands, to his royal father-in-law for the pardon of Philip Lovel, one of his ministers, who lay under the king's heavy displeasure at that time. The royal bride joined in the petition, kneeling with her newly-wedded lord at her father's feet, and hanging on his garments. Henry was so moved by the artless earnestness of their supplications, as to be only able to articulate one word, "Willingly;" and all who sat at the feast melted into tears of tenderness and admiration. The object for whom these interesting pleaders used such powerful intercessions was an unworthy peculator, convicted of receiving bribes in the discharge of his office; nevertheless, the misjudging sovereign was persuaded, by the engaging prattle of two inexperienced children, to invest him with the tempting office of treasurer. No doubt the royal supplicants had received their cue from the queen, or some person who possessed the means of influencing them, to make an appeal in favour of Lovel, for it is very improbable that, at their tender age, they would have thought of him at such a time.

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[1] Chronicles of Mailros.

[2] Matthew Paris. Speed.

The extravagance of dress at these nuptials has been noted by many writers. Matthew Paris declares the nobility were arrayed in vests of silk called 'cointoises,' or 'quintises;' and the day after the nuptial ceremony the queen of England and her ladies laid these new robes aside, and appeared clad in others still more costly, and of a new pattern. The robes *quintises,* thus named to express their fanciful quaintness, were upper, or super-tunics, with no sleeves, or very short ones, bordered with vandyking or scolloping, worked and notched in various patterns; scarfs were worn by knights *à la quintise,* meaning that they were ornamented with a notched border. The quintise robe was worn by queen Eleanor so long, before and behind, as to trail on the ground, and was held up with one hand, lest her steps should be impeded. The Roman de la Rose, speaking of these garments first worn by Eleanor and her court, counsels the ladies, if their feet and ankles be not small and delicate, to let their robes fall on the pavement and hide them; whilst those whose feet are of a beautiful form may hold up the robe in front, for the convenience of stepping along briskly. He uncivilly compares the ladies to pies and peacocks, which, he says, "delight in feathers of various colours: so do our court ladies. The pies have long tails that train in the dirt, but the ladies make their tails a thousand times longer than the peacocks and the pies."

The costume of the portrait illustrating this biography is that worn on high festivals by the queens of England in the thirteenth century. The style of art of the original is much ruder than that of any of our preceding portraits, being from a painted glass window which some years since formed part of the Strawberry-Hill collection. Lord Ashburnham presented it to Horace Walpole, who considered that this was the only resemblance of Eleanor of Provence extant. The original was contemporary with the reign of Henry III., and came from the church of Bexhill, in Sussex. The armorial emblazonments below that and the companion picture, prove that they were intended to represent Eleanor and her consort Henry III.[1] The head of the queen is encircled with the open gothic crown of floriated trefoils, surmounting a rich band of gems. The royal mantle has a low collar or small cape round the neck, fastening in front with a square *fermoir* of gems and wrought gold; the mantle is bordered with an elegant gold lace of a scale pattern. The close gown fitting to the shape is of gold diapered brocade; the sleeves are cut very deep on the hands, which they nearly cover, a peculiarity pertaining to the era of Eleanor of Provence. The artist has bestowed some pains on the delineation of the queen's portrait, as far as the bust, but the rest of the figure is disproportionate and diminutive, like most of the drawings on glass in the mediæval ages.

The felicity which the king and queen enjoyed in the celebration of their daughter's union with the Scottish king, was interrupted by the return of Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, who had passed six years in a sort of honourable banishment as governor of Gascony. Deputies had been sent from that province with complaints of Leicester's tyrannical conduct, and he, having succeeded in refuting the charges of his Gascon foes, proceeded to call upon the king to reward him for his services, reminding him of his royal promise to that effect. Henry, with infinite scorn, replied, that "He did not consider himself obliged to keep his word with a traitor." Leicester fiercely told the sovereign "He lied; and were he not his king, he would make him eat his words;" adding, "that it was scarcely possible to believe he was a Christian, or ever had made confession of his sins."—"Yes," replied the king, "I am a Christian, and have often been at confession."—"What signifies confession," retorted the earl, "without repentance?"—"I never repented of any thing so much in my life," rejoined the insulted monarch, "as having bestowed favours on one who has so little gratitude and such ill manners."[2]

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[1] Anecdotes of Painting, by Horace Walpole. Both figures are very coarsely engraved as the frontispiece of that work; Mr. Harding copied the present from the original in the stained glass.

[2] Matthew Paris.

After this characteristic dialogue, there was nothing but hatred between the king and his insolent brother-in-law.

To add to the troubles of the king and queen at this juncture, even so late as the year 1252, the validity of his marriage with Eleanor was perpetually agitated at the court of Rome, owing to the king's capricious breach of promise with the countess of Ponthieu;[1] and this year he was forced to obtain bulls, at a great expense, from pope Innocent, declaring the contract of the king of England with Joanna (who had been long married to the king of Castile) null and void, and his marriage with Eleanor of Provence good matrimony. In a little time we shall see the heir of Henry and the young daughter of Joanna enter into wedlock. Henry's temper now became so irascible, that he quarrelled with his best friends; he was more extortionate than ever, and demanded of the clergy a tenth of their revenues, towards the expenses of a projected crusade. He sent for the bishop of Ely, who appeared to have great influence with his brethren, and endeavoured by flattering caresses to secure his interest; but when that conscientious prelate attempted to reason with him on the folly of his conduct, Henry angrily retorted, that "he did not want any of his counsels;" and ordered his officers "to turn him out of doors for an ill-bred fellow as he was."[2]

Louis IX. of France, and the gallant retinue by whom he had been attended on his ill-starred expedition to Palestine, were at this time languishing in the most doleful captivity, and the flower of the French chivalry had fallen victims either to the pestilence or the sword. Eleanor talked of accompanying her feeble-minded lord in a crusade for their deliverance; but it was not probable that she would abandon her painted chambers and jewelled pomp, to expose herself to the peril of hardships and privation like those which her sister was suffering at Damietta. The queen was this year again in imminent danger from a thunder-storm; she was with her children visiting the abbey of St. Alban's, when lightning struck the chimney of her chamber, and shivered it to pieces.

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[2] M. Paris.

The abbey-laundry burst into flames; while such a commotion was raised by the elements, that the king's chief-justice, (who was escorting two treasure-carts, and had accepted hospitality at the abbey,) thinking the whole structure was devoted to destruction, rushed forth into the highway with two friars, and as they went, they fancied a flaming torch or a drawn sword preceded them.[1]

The same summer Henry made preparations for going in person to quell the formidable revolt in Guienne, occasioned by the recall of the earl of Leicester and the misgovernment of prince Edward, who had been appointed as his successor in the fourteenth year of his age. Queen Eleanor, being near her confinement, did not accompany the king, but was solemnly invested by her departing lord with the regency of the kingdom, jointly with his brother, Richard earl of Cornwall, the husband of her sister Sancha of Provence. While Henry was waiting in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth for a favourable wind, he made his will, which is a very interesting document, affording proof of his affection for his queen, and the unbounded confidence which he reposed in her.

Henry the Third's Will.[2]

"I, Henry king of England, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and earl of Anjou, on the Tuesday after St. Peter and St. Paul, in the year of grace 1253, at Southwick,[3] proposing to go to Gascony, I make my will in the form following:—I will that my body be buried in the church of the blessed Edward of Westminster, there being no impediment,—having formerly appointed my body to be buried in the New Temple of London. I commit the guardianship of Edward, my eldest son and heir, and of my other children, and of my kingdom of England, and all my other lands in Wales, and Ireland, and Gascony, to my illustrious queen Eleanor, until they arrive at full age. Also, I bequeath the cross which the countess of Kent gave me, to the small altar of the aforesaid church of Westminster."

Though he lived many years after, Henry never made another will. Attended by the greater number of his barons, king Henry sailed from Portsmouth, August 6th: he arrived at Bourdeaux on the 15th of the same month, and took the command of his army in person.

On the 25th of November Eleanor gave birth to a daughter in London, who was christened with great pomp by the archbishop of Canterbury, the queen's uncle. That primate also stood godfather for the infant princess, and bestowed upon her the name of Katherine, because she was born on St. Katherine's-day. She died very young, and was buried in Westminster-abbey by her two brothers, Richard and John, the third and fourth sons of Henry and Eleanor, who had preceded her to the tomb. These royal children repose in the space between the chapels of St. Edward and St. Benet.[1]

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[1] Hist. of the Abbey of St. Alban's.

[2] Nicolas's Testamenta Vetusta.

[3] A convent near Portsmouth.

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[1] Speed.

ELEANOR OF PROVENCE,

SURNAMED LA BELLE,

QUEEN OF HENRY III.

CHAPTER II.

Eleanor's regency—Great seal of England left in her hands—Unlawful exactions—Disputes with city of London—Assemblies of parliament—Her New-year's gift to the king—Goes to Guienne—Her son's nuptials—Feast of kings—Lands in England—Vengeance on the Londoners—Eleanor attends the king to the north—Her sickness at Wark-castle—Court at Woodstock—Death of princess Katherine—Folly of the king—Queen's unpopular conduct—Garrisons Windsor—Prince Edward robs the Templars—Queen pledges jewels—Pelted from London-bridge—Takes sanctuary—Goes to France with the king—Civil war—King and prince taken at Lewes—Queen raises forces on the continent—Battle of Evesham—Londoners fined—Her return to England—Prince Edward's crusade—Household expenses of the queen—Death of Henry III.—Eleanor's widowhood—Refounds St. Katherine's hospital—Death of Eleanor's daughters—Royal letters—Queen retires to Ambresbury—Miracle by Henry III.—Eleanor takes the veil—Visited by king Edward—His dutiful respect—Her death—Petition of Jewish converts.

When Henry III. appointed Eleanor regent of England, he left the great seal in her custody, but enclosed in its casket, sealed with the impression of his own privy seal, and with the signets of his brother, Richard earl of Cornwall, and others of his council. It was only to be opened on occasions of extreme urgency. Eleanor was directed to govern by the advice of her royal brother-in-law, but the regal power was vested in her; and we find that pleas were holden before her and the king's council, in the court of Exchequer, during

Henry's absence in Gascony. "At this time," says Madox,[1] "the queen was *custos regni*, and sat *vice regis*."[2] We have thus an instance of a queen-consort performing, not only the functions of a sovereign, in the absence of the monarch, but acting as a judge in the highest court of judicature, *curia regis*. There can be no doubt but this princess took her seat on the King's-bench.[3]

No sooner had queen Eleanor got the reins of empire in her own hands, unrestrained by the counterbalancing power of the great earl of Leicester, who had volunteered his services to king Henry against the insurgent Gascons, than she proceeded to play the sovereign in a more despotic manner, in one instance at least, than had ever been attempted by the mightiest monarch of the Norman line. Remembering her former disputes with the city of London, she now took the opportunity of gratifying her revenge and covetousness at the same time, by demanding of their magistrates the payment of a large sum, which she insisted they owed her for *aurum reginæ*, or queen-gold,—a due which the queens of England were entitled to claim on every tenth mark paid to the king, as voluntary fines for the royal good-will in the renewals of leases on crown lands, or the granting of charters. Eleanor, in this instance, most unreasonably demanded her queen-gold on various enormous fines that had been unrighteously and vexatiously extorted by the king from the plundered merchants and citizens of London. For the non-payment of this unjust claim, Eleanor, in a very summary manner, committed the sheriffs of London, Richard Picard and John de Northampton, to the Marshalsea prison, in the year 1254;[4] and the same year she again committed them, together with Richard Hardell, draper, the mayor, to the same prison, for arrears of an aid towards the war in Gascony. These arbi-

[1] Madox, History of Exchequer, chap. ii. p. 47.

[2] History of the Exchequer: Judicature of the king's Court.

[3] Placita coram domina regina et consilio domini regis in crastino nativitatis Be. Mariæ, anno 37, Hen. III.—Ex cedula Rotulor. anni illius penes Thes. et Camerar. Rot. 1. 4.

[4] Stowe. Harrison.

trary proceedings of the queen-regent were regarded with indignant astonishment in a city governed by laws peculiar to itself,—London being, in fact, a republic within a monarchy, whose privileges had hitherto been respected by the most despotic sovereigns. It had been hoped that Richard earl of Cornwall, Eleanor's coadjutor in the delegated regal power, would have restrained her from such reckless abuse of the authority with which she had been invested by her absent lord; but since his marriage with her sister, that prince had ceased to oppose the queen in any of her doings. Thus the queen and the countess of Cornwall made common cause, contriving to govern between them the king and his brother, and through them the whole realm, according to their own pleasure.

Early in the year, Eleanor received instructions from the king to summon a parliament, for the purpose of demanding aid for carrying on the war in Gascony. But finding it impossible to obtain this grant, queen Eleanor sent the king five hundred marks from her own private coffers, as a New-year's gift, for the immediate relief of his more pressing exigencies.[1] Henry then directed his brother to extort from the luckless Jews the sum required for the nuptial festivities of his heir. As soon as Henry received the glittering fruits of this iniquity, he sent for Eleanor, to assist him in squandering away the supply in the light and vain expenses in which they mutually delighted, likewise to grace with her presence the bridal of their eldest son, prince Edward.[2] Eleanor, who loved power well, but pleasure better, on this welcome summons resigned the cares of government to the earl of Cornwall; and with her sister, the countess of Cornwall, her second son, prince Edmund, and a courtly retinue of ladies, knights, and nobles, sailed from Portsmouth on the 15th of May, and, landing at Bourdeaux, was joyfully welcomed by her husband and their heir, prince Edward, whom she had not seen for upwards of a year. She crossed the Pyrenees with her son, and having assisted at the solemnization of his nuptials with the infanta Eleanora of Castile, returned with the royal bride and bridegroom to king Henry, who was waiting for their arrival at

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[1] Stowe's Annals.

[2] M. Paris.

Bourdeaux. Instead of sailing from thence to England, the queen persuaded Henry to accept the invitation of St. Louis, her brother-in-law, to pass some days at his court with their train.

At Chartres, Eleanor enjoyed the pleasure of embracing her sister, the queen of France, who, with king Louis and their nobles, there met and welcomed their royal guests, and conducted them with all due pomp to Paris.[1] Here Louis assigned the palace of the old Temple for the residence of his royal guests; a domicile that could almost furnish accommodations for an army. The morning after their arrival Henry distributed very abundant alms among the Parisian poor, and made a splendid entertainment for the relatives of his queen, which was, in memory of its magnificence and the number of crowned heads present, called 'the feast of kings.'[2] Contemporary chroniclers declare that neither Ahasuerus, Arthur, nor Charlemagne ever equalled this feast in any of their far-famed doings. King Henry sat at table on the right hand of the king of France, and the king of Navarre on the left. King Louis, with the princely courtesy and meekness which so much characterized the royal saint of France, contended much that the king of England should take the place of honour; but Henry refused to do so, alleging that the king of France was his *suzerain*, in allusion to the lands which he held of him as a vassal peer of France; on which Louis, in acknowledgment of the compliment, softly rejoined, "Would to God that every one had his rights without offence!"[3]

At this memorable entertainment, queen Eleanor enjoyed the happiness of a reunion with her four sisters and their children, and her mother, the countess of Provence. Michelet states, that the three elder daughters of the count of Provence being queens, they made their youngest sister, Beatrice, sit on a stool at their feet,—hence her extreme desire to be the wife of a king. However, it was the law of royal etiquette, and not any personal act of her sisters, which placed Beatrice on the tabouret instead of the throne. After the royal family of

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[1] M. Paris. M. Westminster.

[2] M. Paris.

[3] M. Paris. The king of France alluded to the detention of Normandy and Anjou, the inheritance of the house of Plantagenet.

England had received, during a sojourn of eight days in Paris, all the honour which the power of the king and the wealth of the fair realm of France could bestow, they took their leave of these pleasant scenes. The king and court of France accompanied them one day's journey. Eleanor and her husband landed at Dover on the 5th of January, 1255, and on the 27th made their public entry into London with extraordinary pomp. They received a present of a hundred pounds sterling, which the citizens of London were accustomed to give on such occasions; but as Henry did not seem satisfied, a rich piece of plate of exquisite workmanship was added, which pleased, but certainly did not content, this most acquisitive of all our monarchs; since, a few days after, he extorted a fine of three thousand marks from them, on the frivolous pretence of the escape of a priest from Newgate who was accused of murder. It was very evident to the citizens that Eleanor had not forgotten their resistance of her illegal exactions, for much strife ensued regarding her claims.[1]

Eleanor, who was probably ambitious of being the mother of as many crowned heads as those by whom she had seen the countess of Provence proudly surrounded at the feast of kings, was much elated at the pope sending her second son, prince Edmund, then about ten years old, a ring, whereby he professed to invest him with the kingdom of Sicily. But the delight of king Henry at the imaginary preferment of his favourite son exceeded all bounds. He caused a seal to be made, with the effigies of the young prince enthroned, bearing the sceptre and orb of sovereignty, and crowned with the royal diadem of Sicily.[2] Henry was only deterred from rushing into a war for the purpose of establishing the imaginary claims of his boy to this dignity, by the necessity of rendering his paternal succour to the king and queen of Scots, queen Eleanor having been informed that they were deprived of royal power and kept in close confinement by the regents, sir John Baliol and the Comyns, who were the next heirs to the Scottish crown. The maternal anxiety of the queen being very painfully excited by these reports, she privately despatched her physician, a person in whose sagacity she could confide, into Scotland, to learn the real situation of her daughter. This trusty agent ascertained that the king and queen of Scots were both imprisoned in the castle of Edinburgh, but in separate apartments; and having succeeded in gaining a secret interview with the young queen, she gave him a lamentable account of her treatment ever since her marriage,—"Having been rudely torn," she said, "from her royal husband, and kept apart from him in a doleful damp place, the bad air of which had seriously injured her health; and so far from having any share in the government, they were treated with the utmost contumely, and were in daily peril of their lives."

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[1] In addition to this imposition, Henry forced the Londoners to pay fourpence a-day for the maintenance of a white bear which he kept in the Tower of London, having six years previously commanded the sheriffs of London to provide a muzzle, an iron chain, and a cord for the use of the said royal pet, while fishing in the river Thames. Henry appears to have had a mighty predilection for wild beasts. The menagerie at the Tower was formed in his reign, commencing with three leopards, which his brother-in-law, the emperor, presented to him. Then he had an elephant, which was so highly prized by him, that on its decease he issued a writ to the constable of the Tower, "to deliver the bones of the elephant lately buried in the Tower-ditch to the sacristan of Westminster, to make thereof what he had enjoined him to do."

[2] Speed.

When these alarming tidings reached queen Eleanor she was greatly distressed in mind, and herself accompanied king Henry on a campaign which, at her earnest entreaty, he undertook for the deliverance of their son-in-law and daughter; but before the earl of Gloucester, whom Henry had sent on a special embassy to Scotland, could forward news of his mission, Eleanor's trouble of mind brought on a violent illness, and she was confined to her bed at Wark-castle, with small hopes of her life.[1] At last tidings came that Gloucester and Mansel had gained admittance into the castle of Edinburgh by assuming the dress of tenants of Baliol the governor, and, in this disguise, they were enabled to give secret access to their followers, by whom the garrison was surprised, and the rescued king and queen restored to each other. Their cruel gaolers, Baliol and Ross, were brought to king Henry at Alnwick to answer for their treasons: on their throwing themselves at his feet and imploring for mercy, he forgave them; but as Baliol was his own subject he mulcted him in a heavy fine, which he reserved for his own private use. He then sent for the young king and queen to join him at Alnwick, where the king of Scotland solemnly chose him to be his guardian during the rest of his minority.

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[1] There is among the Tower records a letter from Henry, dated from Wark, September 13th, evidently written while he was yet in suspense as to the result of this affair, enjoining "his dear son Edward of Westminster, and his treasurer Philip Lovel, by the love and faith they owe him, to keep the feasts of his favourite saint, Edward the Confessor, with all due pomp, the same as if himself were present; and to make an offering in gold for himself, for the queen and the royal children: also that they cause to be touched the silver cross on the great altar at Westminster, and offer a plate of gold weighing one ounce, the same as was customary to be done when the king was present at the mass of St. Edward; and that they cause to come solemnly to Westminster, on St. Edward's-day, the procession of the church of St. Margaret, and all the processions of the city of London, with wax-lights, as the king hath commanded the mayor and the honest men of London." Henry concludes with commanding both halls of the palace at Westminster to be filled with poor men and women, who were to be fed at his expense.

Queen Eleanor's illness continued to detain her at Wark-castle, even after her mind was relieved of the anxiety which had caused her sickness. Her indisposition, and extreme desire of her daughter's company, are certified in a letter of king Henry to his son-in-law, the king of Scotland, dated the 20th of September, 1255,[1] in which he specifies, that "The queen of Scotland is to remain with the sick queen her mother, his beloved consort, at Wark-castle, till the said queen is sufficiently recovered to be capable of travelling southward." On Eleanor's convalescence, the king and queen of Scotland accompanied her and king Henry to Woodstock, where she kept her court with more than ordinary splendour, to celebrate their deliverance from their late adversity. There were then three kings and three queens at Woodstock, with their retinues.[2] Richard earl of Cornwall, having obtained his election as successor to the emperor of Germany, had assumed the title of king of the Romans, while his consort, queen Eleanor's sister, took also royal state and title. After exhausting all the pleasures that the sylvan palace of Woodstock, its extensive chase and pleasance, could afford, they proceeded to London, where, in the month of February, the three kings and queens made their public entry, wearing their crowns and royal robes.[3]

All this pomp and festivity was succeeded by a season of gloom and care. The departure of the king and queen of

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera. [2] Matthew Paris. M. Westminster [3] Matthew Paris.

Scotland was followed by that of the new king and queen of the Romans, who went to be crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, carrying with them seven hundred thousand pounds in sterling money. A dreadful famine added to the public embarrassment occasioned by the drain on the specie. It was at this season of public misery that Eleanor, blinded by the selfish spirit of covetousness to the impolicy of her conduct, chose to renew her demands of queen-gold on the city of London. These the king enforced by writs of Exchequer, himself sitting there in person,[1] and compelling the reluctant sheriffs to distrain the citizens for the same. This year the queen lost her little daughter, the lady Katherine, whom she had borne to king Henry during his absence in the Gascon war. Among the Tower records is an order to the treasurer and chamberlains of the treasury, to deliver to master Simon de Wills five marks and a half, for his expenses in bringing from London a certain brass image to be set on the royal infant's tomb at Westminster; and for paying to Simon de Gloucester, the king's goldsmith, for a silver image for the like purpose, the sum of seventy marks.

The ardent desire of the king and queen for the realization of their second son's title as king of Sicily meeting with no encouragement, a little piece of stage effect was devised by the sovereign, by which he foolishly imagined he should move his obdurate barons to grant the pecuniary supplies for his darling project. Having caused the young prince to be attired in the graceful costume of a Sicilian king, he, at the opening of the parliament, presented him to the assembly with the following speech:—"Behold here, good people, my son Edmund, whom God of his gracious goodness hath called to the excellency of kingly dignity. How comely and well worthy is he of all your favour; and how cruel and tyrannical must they be, who, at this pinch, would deny him effectual and seasonable help, both with money and advice!"[2] Of the latter, truth to tell, the barons were in nowise sparing, since they urged the king not to waste the blood and treasure of his suffering people on such a hopeless chimera; but Henry, who was as firm in folly as he was unstable in well-doing, pertinaciously returned to the charge, notwithstanding the strange insensibility manifested by the peers to the comeliness of the young prince and the picturesque beauty of his Sicilian dress, for which the royal sire, in the fond weakness of paternal vanity, had condescended to bespeak the admiration of the stern assembly. The aid was finally obtained through the interference of the pope's legate, but on condition that the sovereign should consider himself bound by the Oxford statutes. The object of those statutes was to reduce the power of the crown within moderate limits.

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[1] Stowe's London.

[2] M. Paris.

One day, as the sovereign was proceeding by water to the Tower, he was overtaken by a tremendous thunder-storm, and in great alarm bade the boatman push for the first stairs, forgetting in his fright that they belonged to Durham-house, where Leicester then dwelt. The earl, with unwelcome courtesy, came to receive his royal brother-in-law as he landed from the boat, telling him, at the same time, "not to be alarmed, as the storm was spent."—"I am beyond measure afraid of thunder and lightning; but, by the head of God! I fear thee more than all the thunder in the world," replied Henry, with as fierce a look as he could assume.[1] To which Leicester mildly rejoined, "My lord, you are to blame to fear your only true and firm friend, whose sole desire it is to preserve England from ruin, and yourself from the destruction which your false counsellors are preparing for you."

Henry, far from confiding in these professions, took the earliest opportunity of leaving the kingdom, to seek assistance from the foreign connexions of his queen. In his absence, the king and queen of Scots arrived at Windsor-castle, on a visit to queen Eleanor. A few days after Henry's return, John duke of Bretagne came over to wed the princess Beatrice. The earl of Leicester allowed the king and queen ample supplies for the entertainment of these illustrious guests.[2] The court at Windsor had never been more numerously attended, or more magnificently appointed, than on this occasion; but there was a pervading gloom on the mind of the royal parents, which the presence of their eldest daughter and the marriage of the second failed to dissipate. The young queen of Scotland passed the whole winter with her mother at Windsor-castle, where she lay in of a daughter.

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[1] M. Paris.

[2] T. Wikes. Rapin.

The state of Henry's mind just before the outbreak of the barons' war is apparent from his issuing directions to his painter, master Williams, a monk of Westminster, to paint a picture for him of 'a king rescued by his dogs from an attack made upon him by his subjects.' Philip Lovel, the king's treasurer, is ordered by this precept, which was issued in the fortieth year of Henry's reign, to disburse to the said master Williams the full charges and expenses of executing this picture; which is directed to be placed in the wardrobe of Westminster, where the king was accustomed to wash his head. At this period, the king and queen chiefly confined themselves within one or other of the royal fortresses of Windsor or the Tower, which he had fortified with additional defences to stand a siege. After Henry had violated the provisions of Oxford, he took up his residence in the Tower of London, while Eleanor remained with a strong garrison to keep Windsor.

In 1261 died the queen's sister, Sancha countess of Cornwall and queen of the Romans, for whom the king and queen made great lamentations, and gave her a magnificent funeral. In that year the royal party gained such strength, that the earl of Leicester found it most prudent to withdraw to the continent. Prince Edward returned to England, to guard the realm while king Henry went to Gascony, where his presence was required, and where he fell sick of a quartan ague, which detained him there during the autumn.

While prince Edward was carrying on the war against the Welch, Leicester's party became more formidable, and in 1262 that mighty agitator returned almost at the same time with the king, to whom he caused the barons to present an address requiring him to confirm the Oxford statutes, adding a defiance to all who opposed them, the king, the queen, and their royal children excepted. This exception may be regarded, all things considered, as a very remarkable piece of civility on the part of the reforming barons of the 13th century. One of the most influential of these was Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk and

Suffolk, to whom in angry parlance king Henry said, "What, sir earl! are you so bold with me, whose vassal peer you are? Could I not issue my royal warrant for thrashing out all your corn?"—"Ay," retorted the earl, "and could I not in return send you the heads of the thrashers?"[1]

Bold men would they have been who had ventured to undertake that office. A striking instance of the disregard of all moral restraints among the high and mighty in that reign of misery, may be seen in the lawless robbery committed by the heir-apparent of the realm on the treasury of the knights Templars, in the year 1263. Those military monks, it is well known, were not only the masters of great wealth, but acted as bankers and money-brokers to all Europe; lending sums on rich pledges at usurious interest. Queen Eleanor, at the commencement of the troubles in which her reckless counsels had involved the king, had pawned her jewels to this fraternity. On the return of prince Edward from his victorious campaign in Wales, finding himself without the means of disbursing the arrears of pay which he owed the troops, and unwilling to disband men whom he foresaw his father's cause would require, marched straightway to the Temple, and told the master that it was his pleasure to see the jewels of the queen his mother, as he understood they were not safely kept. On this excuse he entered the treasury, and broke open the coffers of many persons who had lodged their money and pledges for security in the hands of the Templars, and seized ten thousand pounds sterling, principally belonging to the citizens of London, which, together with the queen's jewels, he carried off to the royal fortress of Windsor.[2] A few months afterwards the queen pawned these jewels a second time to her sister's husband, the king of France; that monarch, probably, regarding the robbery of the Templars as a very small sin.[3]

[1] M. Paris.

[2] Chronicle of Dunmow. Annals of St. Augustine. Rapin. Harrison's Survey of London, &c. &c.

[3] For Louis had permitted his attached friend and follower, the lord de Joinville, who triumphantly records the fact in his chronicle of the crusade, to break open the treasure-chests of this wealthy fraternity of the church-militant at Damietta with a sledge-hammer, and take from thence the sum required to make up his ransom.—Joinville's Chronicle; Vie de St. Louis

The active part taken by queen Eleanor and her eldest son in the mismanagement of the king's affairs at this critical period, is recorded by Matthew Paris, who is certainly a credible witness, and one who had every means of information on the subject; since, from the great respect in which his talents were held by king Henry, he was invited to dine at the royal table every day, and, as he himself states, frequently wrote in the presence and from the dictation of the king. Neither Henry nor Eleanor were probably aware how oft that sly monk took notes of their foolish sayings and evil doings, for the example of distant generations; enriching his chronicle, moreover, with many a choice anecdote, illustrative of the personal history of royalty in the thirteenth century. Robert of Gloucester, a contemporary thus notices the proceedings of the queen, and prince Edward's political opinions:

"The queen went beyond sea, the king's brethren also,
And ever they strove the charter to undo;
They purchased that the pope should assoil, I wis,
Of the oath, and the charter, and the king, and all his.

It was ever the queen's thought (as much as *she* could think)
To break the charter by some woman's wrenche;[1]
And though sir Edward proved a hardy knight and good,
Yet this same charter was little to his mood."

Many indeed were the wiles and evasions, very inconsistent with the stern and soldier-like plainness of his character in after life, which were practised by the valiant heir of England, while acting under the influence of his insincere mother, in the hope of circumventing the barons by fraud, if not by force.

In this year, notwithstanding the reluctance of the queen,[2] king Henry was induced to sign an amicable arrangement with the barons, by which he bound himself to confirm the provisions of Oxford. This agreement, which might have averted the storm of civil strife, was regarded with fierce impatience by some of the destructives of the thirteenth century, who, eager for plunder and athirst for blood, finding they were likely to be disappointed in the object which had led them to rank themselves on the side of the reforming barons and their great dictator Montfort, raised a dreadful uproar in London against the unhappy Jews, whose wealth excited their envy and cupidity.

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[1] Pronounced *wrenk*, meaning twisting or wrenching the words of Magna Charta from their clear and simple signification.

[2] M. Westminster.

T. Wikes, a contemporary chronicler, thus details the particulars of this tumult, which was the prelude to a personal attack upon the queen:—At the sound of St. Paul's great bell a numerous mob sallied forth, led on by Stephen Buckrell, the marshal of London, and John Fitz-John, a powerful baron. They killed and plundered many of these wretched people without mercy. The ferocious leader, John Fitz-John, ran through with his sword, in cold blood, Kokben Abraham, the wealthiest Hebrew resident in London. Besides plundering and killing five hundred of this devoted race, the mob turned the rest out of their beds, undressed as they were, keeping them so the whole night. The next morning they commenced the work of plunder with such outrageous yells, that the queen, who was then at the Tower, seized with mortal terror, got into her barge with many of her great ladies, the wives and daughters of the noblest, intending to escape by water to Windsor-castle. But the raging populace, to whom she had rendered herself most obnoxious, as soon as they observed the royal barge on the river, made a general rush to the bridge, crying, "Drown the witch!—drown the witch!" at the same time pelting the queen with mud, addressing the most abusive language to her, and endeavouring to sink the vessel by hurling down blocks of wood and stone of an enormous weight, which they tore from the unfinished buildings of the bridge. The poor ladies were pelted with rotten eggs and sheep's bones, and every thing vile.[1] If the queen had persisted in shooting the arch, the boat must have been swamped, or her vessel dashed to pieces by the formidable missiles that were aimed at her person. As it was, she with difficulty escaped the fury of the assailants by returning to the Tower. Not considering herself safe there, she took sanctuary at night in the bishop of London's palace at St. Paul's, whence she was privately removed to Windsor-castle, where prince Edward kept garrison with his troops. This high-spirited prince never forgave the Londoners for the insult they had thus offered to his mother.[1]

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[1] Matthew of Westminster. Wikes. Speed. Rapin.

Though Eleanor had been a most unprincipled plunderer of the Jews, whenever opportunity served, she was accused of patronising them, because great numbers of them had flocked into England at the time of her marriage with king Henry, the Provençal princes having always granted toleration to this people. Eleanor never forgot her terror at London-bridge, which had the effect of hurrying forward the civil war. The epithets of witch and sorceress, which were liberally bestowed on the queen by her enemies from the bridge, must have originated from a strange story, preserved in the French Chronicle of London; and however absurd the narrative may be, there is little doubt that it was purposely circulated among the ignorant populace by the opponents of the court, to excite a cry against the queen. The story commences by stating that Henry III., having admired the fairest damsel in the world, the queen took her privately and put her to death, by the assistance of some old sorceresses with whom she was leagued, who poisoned her with toads. At the end of the story the girl is called Rosamond, and the king described as burying her with great grief at Godstow.[2] The enemies of the queen had not even taken the trouble to invent a new story to enrage the Londoners against her. Although the tale is a barefaced and evident falsehood, yet, from the antiquity of the work in which it is cited, there can be no doubt that it was a scandal raised among the Londoners to her injury. At the time when the barons had agreed to refer their grievances to the arbitration of St. Louis, the brother-in-law of the queen, king Henry took Eleanor with him to France, and left her there in October 1264, with her children, at the court of her sister Marguerite.

The decision of St. Louis, though really a rational one, did not satisfy the barons, who protested against it on the grounds of family partiality, and England was forthwith involved in the flames of civil war. After Henry had placed his adored queen in security, and taken a tender leave of her and her young children, he returned to England to encounter the storm, with more spirit and manliness than was usual to his character. On Passion-Sunday, Henry gained a great victory at Northampton over the barons; he took his rebellious nephew, the earl of Leicester's eldest son, prisoner, together with fourteen of the leading barons.[1] Henry used his victory with great moderation.[2] At the castle of Tunbridge the fair countess of Gloucester, the wife of one of the most inveterate of his foes, fell into his hands, but he generously set her at liberty, with the courteous remark, "that he did not war on ladies." This occasioned some scandal at the court of France, where it appears that either his loving consort Eleanor was afflicted with a fit of jealousy, or that queen Marguerite had taken alarm for her sister; since, from among the records of the Wakefield tower, has been brought to light a curious letter from that queen on this subject.[3] The queen of France, with whom at this juncture queen Eleanor was residing, wrote to Henry III., her royal brother-in-law, thanking him for his inquiries after her health, and stating that, "though much desiring the society of her sister his queen, she would hasten her departure to him according to his request; because she feared that, on account of her long delay, he would *marry some other* lady, and that as long as the countess of Gloucester remained in his vicinity, she should be impatient till she knew that her sister had joined him." These doubts and fears of the queen of France, lest the mild and much-enduring Henry should take unto him a new spouse, are novel features in his domestic history. However, queen Marguerite's letter is evidently written in a vein of playfulness that few persons would look for at that era, and we should deem the whole a piece of badinage, if this same fair countess of Gloucester had not nearly excited a civil war by her coquetries with prince Edward some time afterwards. But that she should have made a deliberate attack on the constant heart of the old king, in the absence of the queen, would seem incredible, were not the letter of the queen's sister indisputable.

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[1] Matthew of Westminster, in his Flowers of History, details this outrage with some spirit, in the Latin of the cloister.

[2] The French Chronicle of London, edited by G. J. Aungier, from the Cottonian library, Camden Society.

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[1] In this action, the insurgent students of Oxford, fifteen thousand in number, who fought under the banner of the university against the crown, were the most formidable of Henry's assailants. When victory declared in his favour, the king would have inflicted a severe vengeance on them, had he not been deterred by his counsellors, who, in a great fright, reminded him "that these bellicose students were the sons and kindred of the nobles and magnates of the land, many of them the heirs of his own adherents withal, who had been carried away by the evil example of their companions, or excited by the misdirected ardour of youthful enthusiasm, to swell the ranks of the popular party against him; and if he slew them, their blood would be terribly revenged on him and his, even by those nobles who fought in his cause."

[2] Speed.

[3] Calendar of the Royal Letters in the Wakefield tower.—Fourth Report of the deputy Keeper of the Records, p. 147. The letter is without date, but this is the period, we think, to which it belongs.

So well had the royal cause prospered in the commencement of the struggle, that when the rival armies were encamped within six miles of each other, near Lewes, the barons sent word to the king, that they would give him thirty thousand marks if he would consent to a pacification. Prince Edward, who was burning to avenge the insults which had been offered to the queen his mother, dissuaded Henry from accepting these terms, and the battle of Lewes followed.

> "The king and his meinie were in the priorie,
> When Simon came to field and raised his bannere;
> He showed forth his shield, his dragon full austere:
> The king said on high, 'Simon, je vous defie!'"

The battle of Lewes was lost through the reckless fury with which the fiery heir of England pursued the flying Londoners, in order to avenge their incivility in pelting his mother at their bridge. He followed them with his cavalry, shouting the name of queen Eleanor, as far as Croydon, where he made a merciless slaughter of the hapless citizens. When he returned to the field of battle with his jaded cavalry, he found his father, who had lost the support of all the horse, had been captured, with his uncle the king of the Romans, and Edward had no other resource than surrendering himself also to Leicester, who conveyed him, with his other royal prisoners, to the castle of Wallingford.

The remnant of the royal army retreated to Bristol-castle, under the command of seven knights, who reared seven banners on the walls. The queen was said by some to be safe in France, but old Robert of Gloucester asserts that she was *espy*[1] in the land, for the purpose of liberating her brave son. Let this be as it may, she sent word to sir Warren de Basingbourne, her son's favourite knight and one of the gallant defenders of Bristol, "that Wallingford was but feebly guarded, and that her son might be released, if he and the rest of the Bristol garrison would attack it by surprise." Directly sir Warren received the queen's message, he, with three hundred horse, crossed the country, and arrived at Wallingford on a Friday, just as the sun rose, and, right against All Hallows' church, made the first fierce attack on the castle, and won the outermost wall. The besieged defended themselves furiously with cross-bows and battle engines: at last they called out to sir Warren, that "If they wanted *sire* Edward the prince, they should have him, but bound hand and foot, and shot from the mangonel,"—a terrific machine used for casting stones. As soon as the prince heard of this murderous intention, he demanded leave to speak with his friends, and coming on the wall, assured them, "that if they persevered, he should be destroyed." Whereupon sir Warren and his chevaliers retired in great dejection. Simon de Montfort then transferred all his royal prisoners, for safer keeping, to Kenilworth-castle, where Edward's aunt, his countess, was abiding, and who offered them "all the solace she could."

The queen, thus disappointed in the liberation of her gallant heir, soon after found a partisan in a lady strongly attached to her. This was lady Maud Mortimer. Lord Roger Mortimer had, much against the wishes of his lady, given his powerful aid to Leicester; but having received some affront since the victory of Lewes, he now turned a complacent ear to the loyal pleadings of lady Maud in behalf of the queen and her son.[2] What all the valour of sir Warren failed to accomplish, the wit of woman effected. Lady Maud Mortimer having sent her instructions to prince Edward, he made his escape by riding races with his attendants till he had tired their horses, when he rode up to a thicket, where dame Maud had ambushed a swift steed. Mounting his gallant courser, Edward turned to his guard, and bade them "commend him to his sire the king, and tell him he would soon be at liberty," and then galloped off; while an armed party appeared on the opposite hill, a mile distant, and displayed the banner of Mortimer.

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[1] Concealed.

[2] Robert of Gloucester.

> "Why should halt a long tale? He off scaped so,
> To the castle of Wigmore the way soon he took;
> There was joy and bliss enow, when he came thither.
> To the lady of that castle, dame Maud de Mortimer."

Eleanor had, soon after the disastrous field of Lewes, borrowed all the money she could raise on her jewels and credit. When she heard of her son's escape, she proceeded to muster forces and equip a fleet. Matthew of Westminster does full justice to the energetic efforts of "this noble virago," as he styles queen Eleanor, for the liberation of her husband. "She succeeded," he says, "in getting together a great army, commanded by so many dukes and earls as seemed incredible; and those who knew the strength and power of that army affirmed, "that if they had once landed in England, they would presently have subdued the whole population of the country; but God in his mercy," continues the chronicler, "ordered it otherwise." The queen and her armament remained long wind-bound, and in the mean time Leicester encamped with his victorious army on Barham-downs, in readiness to attack her in the event of her attempting to land.[1]

There are letters in the Fœdera, written during Henry's captivity, addressed by him "to queen Eleanor, abiding in foreign parts," in which "he assures her of his health and comfort, and continued affection for her and their children, and of his good hopes of a happy peace being soon established (through the blessing of God) in his dominions." These letters are, however, evidently written under the restraint and dictation of the earl of Leicester, since the captive monarch desires, nay, commands the queen to "abstain from any attempts to alter the state of things, and charges her to exhort his heir not to interfere in any way against his will, which will be further explained by master Edward de Carol, the deacon of Wells, who is the bearer of these missives." They are dated

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[1] Halsted's Hist. of Kent.

Windsor, 18th of November, 1264.[1] Eleanor, of course, paid no regard to the forced mandates of her unfortunate consort, but, like a faithful helpmate in the time of trouble, exerted all the energies of her nature for his deliverance. Possessing the pen of a ready writer, she addressed the most persuasive letters to Urban IV. and his legates, setting forth the zeal and obedience her husband had ever shown to the church.[2] She obtained bulls in favour of her party, which were of great service to the royal cause.

While queen Eleanor remained wind-bound on the coast of France, the battle of Evesham was fought and won by her son, prince Edward. Leicester mistook prince Edward's army for that of his own son, Simon de Montfort, which the prince had intercepted and dispersed. When Leicester discovered his error, he was struck with consternation, and exclaimed, "May the Lord have mercy on our souls! for our bodies are the prince's."[3] Leicester exposed his royal prisoner and former benefactor, king Henry, to the shafts of his own friends, by placing him in the front of the battle. Poor Henry was wounded with a javelin in the shoulder, and was in imminent danger of being slain by a royalist soldier, who, mistaking him for one of Leicester's party, would have cut him down, had he not cried out, in a lamentable voice, "Slay me not: I am Henry of Winchester, your king." An officer, hearing this, ran to his assistance, rescued him from his perilous situation, and brought him to prince Edward, who, greeting him with the tenderest affection, knelt and implored his blessing; and then, leaving a strong guard for his protection, pursued his victorious career.

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. i.

[2] Matthew of Westminster.

[3] Robert of Gloucester, in strains of rugged strength, bewails the death of Leicester, and describes the singular darkness which overshadowed the fatal plain of Evesham "while England's barons fought a field."

"Such was the murther of Evesham, for battle none it was."

He proceeds to say, that the victory was much displeasing to the Saviour, who sent a token of his anger by a darkness over the middle earth, such as befell when he died on the rood. For,

"The while the good men at Evesham were slew,
In the north-west a dark weather arose,
Suddenly swart enow that many men *egros*, [terrified]
And overcast all through the land, that me might scarcely see,
Grislier weather than it was might not on earth be;
Few drops of rain fell, but they were large enow,
Tokening well through the land, when these men were slew,
For thirty mile then. This I saw, (Roberd
That first this book made,) and I was sore afraid."

This battle was fought on the 4th of August, 1265, fourteen months after the defeat and capture of the king at Lewes. Though great provocation had been given to the king and every member of the royal family, there was not a single drop of blood shed on the scaffold after this decisive triumph. Henry, with all his faults and follies, was tender of human life, and mindful that the noblest prerogative of the crown is mercy. Neither is it recorded of queen Eleanor that she ever caused a sanguinary vengeance to be inflicted on any of her foes. King Henry, however, made the Londoners pay pretty dearly for the pelting they had bestowed on the high and mighty lady, his companion.[1] His act of grace commences thus:—"Know ye, that in consideration of twenty thousand marks, paid to us by our citizens of London, as an atonement for their great crimes and misdemeanors against us, our royal consort, our royal brother, Richard king of the Romans, and our dear son Edward, that we have and do, by these our presents, remit, forgive, acquit," &c. &c. This enormous fine was not paid into the king's exchequer, every farthing of it being devoted to queen

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[1] He divested the city of its ancient charters, caused its posts and chains to be taken away, and ordered the mayor, with a party of the principal citizens, to attend him at Windsor, to confirm the instrument of their own degradation by affixing the seal of the city to a written form of their submission to the royal mercy. When they arrived at Windsor, they were treated with the utmost contumely by the officers of the royal household, and committed to the custody of the constable of the castle, who shut them up in the keep till the following day; when, as a great favour, they were bestowed in less alarming lodgings, except the mayor and four of the most obnoxious to the royal cause, who were delivered to prince Edward, and by him subjected to a rigorous confinement till they had paid ransom for their own persons, and consented to petition the king to name a sum as the price of reconciliation with the city of London. Henry, not being a prince to whom *carte blanche* terms could be offered with impunity, demanded the enormous fine of sixty thousand marks. But the luckless citizens pleaded so movingly the impossibility of raising so unreasonable a sum, without involving in utter ruin many families who had been guiltless of all offence against him and the queen, that he was at length induced to moderate his demands to twenty thousand marks.—Harrison's Survey.

Eleanor's use, and by her desire it was transmitted to certain persons in France, who had supplied her with money at her need, during her exile from England.[1]

As for Henry, he had a rich harvest of fines and confiscations, granted by his obliging parliament from the lands of the rebel barons. The "disinherited," as they were called, who were thus stripped of their patrimony, having nothing more to lose than their lives, raised a fresh revolt under the banner of Simon de Montfort, Leicester's eldest son by king Henry's sister. The consequences of this rebellion were happily averted by the arrival of the queen, who landed at Dover, October 29th, 1266, bringing with her the pope's legate, cardinal Ottobone, whom she had induced to visit England, for the purpose of hurling the anathema of the church against the rebel barons. Ottobone accordingly convened a synod, and solemnly excommunicated all the adherents of the late earl of Leicester, whether living or dead, which had a wonderful effect in suppressing the insurrection. The discontented annalists of the era mention this event by saying that the queen returned with the legate, and that "together they made a great cursing." Thus did Eleanor see the happy termination of the barons' wars, and was once more settled with her royal partner on the throne of England.

In the year 1267, the formidable revolt of the earl of Gloucester occurred. Fortunately for the queen, she was at Windsor when his partisans stormed her palace at Westminster, which they sacked, breaking and destroying every thing they could not carry away, even to the doors and windows, and making a great slaughter of the royal domestics, who offered some slight resistance. They also did great mischief to the beautiful new-built abbey. Four of these banditti being discovered to be the servants of the earl of Derby, were, by that nobleman's orders, tied up in sacks, and thrown into the Thames.[2] It was at this juncture that prince Edward personally encountered the last adherent of Leicester, and overcame him. Hemmingford and Wikes record in these words a fact highly creditable both to Eleanor and her son:—"Edward engaged the brave outlaw, Adam de

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[1] Annals of London. T. Wikes.

[2] Stowe.

Gordon, in Alton-wood, hand to hand, and fairly conquered him in a personal encounter. After granting him his life, he brought him to his wife's palace of Guildford, where his mother happened to be that evening, and introducing him to the queen, pleaded so earnestly for him, that Henry III. pardoned this adherent of Leicester, and Eleanor soon after gave Gordon an office at Windsor-castle."[1]

St. Edward's chapel being now completed, and forming the crowning glory of that sublime *chef d'œuvre* of gothic architecture, St. Peter's-abbey at Westminster, which Henry III. had been fifty years in building, he, on the 13th of October, St. Edward's-day, 1269, assisted by his sons Edward and Edmund, and his brother the king of the Romans, bore the bier of the royal saint on his shoulders, and, in the presence of his queen and all the nobles of his court, placed it in its new station. Queen Eleanor offered a silver image of the Virgin, and other jewels of great value, at the shrine. King Henry reserved the old coffin of St. Edward for his own private use; having, with his usual simplicity, an idea that its previous occupation by the royal saint had made it a peculiarly desirable tenement.[2]

From the Exchequer rolls of this reign[3] some light is thrown on the domestic usages of royalty in the middle ages. The royal table was, it should seem, chiefly supplied by the sheriffs of the counties or the bailiffs of towns. Thus, we find that the sheriff of the counties of Buckingham and Bedford, by the king's command, on one occasion brought four hundred and twenty-eight hens to Westminster for his use. The bailiffs of Bristol provided conger eels, and the sheriffs of Essex fowls and other victuals. The bailiffs of Newhaven brought lampreys. The sheriff of Gloucester was commanded to put twenty salmons into his pies, against Christmas. The herring-pies of Yarmouth and Norwich still form part of their quit-rent to the crown. The sheriff of Sussex was to furnish brawn, and other provisions for the royal use. The sheriff of Wiltshire provided oxen, hogs, sheep, fruit, corn, and many other things for the queen, when she was at her dower-castle of Marlborough. These requisitions were, however, by no means confined to eatables. In the thirty-seventh of Henry III.'s reign, the sheriffs of Wiltshire and Sussex were each ordered to buy a thousand ells of fine linen, and to send it to the royal wardrobe at Westminster before the next Whitsuntide; and the linen was to be very fair and delicate in quality. In the forty-second of Henry, the sheriffs of Norfolk and Suffolk were commanded to disburse thirty bezants, to be offered at St. Edmund's shrine for the king and queen, and their children. The sheriff of Nottinghamshire was enjoined to cause the queen's chamber at Nottingham-castle to be painted with the history of Alexander the Great; and the sheriff of Southampton to cause the image of St. Christopher, with our Saviour in his arms, and the image of St. Edward the king, to be painted in her chapel at Winchester.[1]

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[1] From the original Latin.

[2] Wikes.

[3] Madox, Hist. Excheq. Liberat. 37 H. III. m. 4.

In one of the Tower rolls, dated Woodstock, April 30th, in the thirty-second year of Henry III.'s reign, that monarch directs his treasurer and chamberlain to pay master Henry the poet, whom he affectionately styles "our beloved master Henry, the versificator," one hundred shillings, due to him for the arrears of his salary, enjoining them to pay it without delay, though the exchequer was then shut. In Henry's thirty-fourth year, occurs his order to the master of the Temple, that he deliver to 'Henry of the wardrobe,' for two years' use, "a certain great book, which is at his house in London, written in French, containing the acts of the king of Antioch, and of other kings." It had been compiled and illuminated under the care of Henry himself, and if it was, as supposed, relating to the crusading Provençal princes of Antioch, it would be a valuable history.[2]

In the great roll of the forty-ninth of Henry III. there is a curious account of queen Eleanor's wardrobe expenses, as rendered by Hugh of the Pen,—from the feast of St. Philip and St. James in the forty-first year of the king her husband, till the feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, forty-ninth year, under the control of Alexander de Bradeham, chaplain to the queen. The accounts are of a more creditable nature to Eleanor than might be imagined, when we consider the reckless expenditure of the first years of her marriage.[1] There was expended in the linen department, the butlery, kitchen, scullery, hall, in feeding the poor, in liveries of garçons, farriery and shoeing of horses, six thousand eight hundred and sixteen pounds. In oblations for holidays, and alms distributed daily, and by the wayside, one hundred and fifty-one pounds and eighteen shillings. In silks, mantles, upper garments, linen hose for her ladies, and other miscellaneous expenses for the wardrobe, a hundred and four-score pounds, eleven shillings, and twelve-pence halfpenny. In jellies, spices, apples, pears, and other fruit, two hundred and fifty-two pounds, sixteen shillings, and nine-pence halfpenny. In jewels bought for the queen's use, to wit, eleven rich garlands, with emeralds, pearls, sapphires, and garnets, of the value of one hundred and forty-five pounds, four shillings, and four-pence. In horses purchased, and robes for the queen's family, in mending robes, in shoes, saddles, reins, almonds, wax, and other necessaries for the wardrobe, one thousand six hundred and ninety-one pounds, twelve shillings, and one penny. In gifts presented to knights, clerks, and other messengers coming to the queen, three hundred and sixty-eight pounds, eleven shillings, and ten-pence. Over and above the large amount for public charity, this creditable entry is carried to account; "in secret gifts and private alms, four thousand and seventeen pounds, ten shillings, and three-pence." Thus we see how large a portion of her income Eleanor of Provence devoted to charitable purposes. But the character of this queen undoubtedly improved as she advanced into the vale of years. The sum-total of these expenses is 21,960*l.* 3*s.* 7½*d.*, and the accomptant acknowledges that he was in surplusage 10,446*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.*

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[1] Madox, Hist. Exchequer Rolls, Memoranda and Liberat. of that reign. Some of these supplies we know were quit-rents, as the herring-pies of Yarmouth and Norwich. The sheriffs, in other instances, bought the productions for which each locality was famous, and paid themselves out of the crown-rents of the county or city.

[2] Close Rolls, quoted by Brayley; Hist. Palace of Westminster.

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[1] From the perusal of the ancient rolls, it appears that a part of the royal revenue was always devoted to alms. This alms was called '*eleemosyna constituta*,' or settled alms, and we find that pensions were accustomed to be paid to the servants of the king and queen, when sickness or age incapacitated them from the performance of their respective duties. In the reign of Henry III., the sheriffs of London were commanded "to pay unto Richard the carter the penny per day of the king's alms, which Nicholas the carpenter used to receive of the sheriffs of that city for the time being." The king granted to Elias de Mileford, for his good service, three halfpence per day during his life; and to Pentecost de Farnham, the king's porter, twopence per day, to be received of the sheriff of Essex until the king should otherwise provide for him. In the royal household there was an *eleemosyna statuta*, besides what was dispensed in oblations and daily alms by the hands of the king and queen's almoners, in clothing for the poor, and other necessaries sent to them. These alms and charities, with others of the like kind, were disbursed out of the king's wardrobe, and the queen's private charities out of her wardrobe accounts.

When men were indebted to the queen for *aurum reginæ*, she sometimes respited, pardoned, and discharged the debt, as she saw fit.[1] Eleanor, oppressive and exacting as she was, occasionally exercised this gracious prerogative, as we learn from memoranda contained in the rolls of the Exchequer, where it is recorded that the queen gave respite to Imoyne de Sulleye for thirty marks, which he owed her for *aurum reginæ;* and in the same roll, dated Southampton, it is certified, "that the queen pardoned Patrick de Chauces a hundred shillings, owed for queen-gold, due on the fine which he paid to the king, to have seisin of the lands that were his patrimony."[2] In the fifth roll there is also record of Thomas, son of Aucher, having respite of the fine of fifteen marks, due for a trespass in the forest, and of the portion coming to Eleanor.

The nuptials of queen Eleanor's second son, Edmund earl of Lancaster and Derby, with the beautiful Aveline, heiress of William Fortibus, earl of Albemarle, had been celebrated on the 8th of April, 1270, before his departure for the Holy Land. The youthful bride died before his return, in the first year of her nuptials.[3] Her death was quickly followed by that of the king of the Romans, for grief of which king Henry fell into the deepest dejection of mind, and having been in person to quell a riot in Norwich, in which great part of the cathedral was burnt, he was attacked with a mortal sickness at Bury St. Edmund's; but his anxiety to settle the affairs of the kingdom caused him to insist on being carried forward to London by short stages. When the dying monarch arrived in the metropolis, finding his dissolution at hand, he summoned Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, into his presence, and made him swear to preserve the peace of England during the absence of prince Edward. He expired on the 16th of November, 1272, aged sixty-six, having reigned fifty-six years and twenty-days. His decease happening in the night, John Kirkeby delivered the royal seal the next morning to Peter of Winchester, keeper of the wardrobe, the archbishop of York, and the rest of the council.[1] By the only will king Henry ever made, queen Eleanor having been appointed regent of England, she caused the council to assemble at the new Temple on the 20th of November, the feast of St. Edmund the martyr and king, where, by her consent[2] and appointment, and the advice of Robert Kilwardby, archbishop of Canterbury, the earl of Gloucester, and the chief peers and prelates of the realm, her eldest son, prince Edward, was proclaimed king of England, by the style and title of Edward I.

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[1] Madox, Hist. of the Exchequer.

[2] The care of the wards of the crown was occasionally granted to the queen, as we find by a memorandum of Henry III., specifying that queen Eleanor, having the custody of Baldwin de Lisle, her ward, the hereditary chamberlain of the exchequer, presented Thomas Esperen to the barons to fulfil his duties as deputy chamberlain, and her appointment was confirmed by the king.

[3] She was interred, with pompous obsequies, in Westminster-abbey, near the altar; her stately monument and effigy adding another ornament to the marvels of sculptured art, with which the exquisite taste of Henry III. had graced that august repository of England's royal dead.

The remains of king Henry, royally robed and crowned, were, according to his own desire, placed in the old coffin in which the body of Edward the Confessor had originally been interred, and buried near the shrine of that monarch in Westminster-abbey. The knights-Templars, with the consent of queen Eleanor. his widow, undertook the care and expense of his funeral, which was very magnificent.[3] They raised a sumptuous monument to his memory, which was afterwards richly inlaid with jasper and precious stones, brought from the Holy Land by his son Edward I. for that purpose. His recumbent statue is in fine preservation,—a noble work of art. Stowe gives the following translation of his Latin epitaph :—

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[1] Stowe

[2] Speed. Sir H. Nicolas. Chron. Hist.

[3] Harrison's Survey.

"The friend of pity and alms-deed,
Henry the Third whilome of England king,
Who this church brake, and after, at his meed,
Again renewed into this fair building,
Now resteth here, which did so great a thing."

The pope addressed a pastoral letter of condolence to Eleanor on the death of the king her husband: it is written jointly to her and king Edward, whom he felicitates on his accession, and requests Eleanor to give him the letter on his return. One of the first things that occupied the attention of the royal widow was, the refounding St. Katherine's hospital, for a master, a chaplain, three sisters, ten bedewomen, and six poor scholars; she having previously dissolved the original establishment of Matilda of Boulogne, on account of misgovernment.

Soon after his return, Edward I. was forced to rectify a wrong committed by his mother, which was much in the style of her former acts of rapacity. Just before the death of her husband, she had persuaded him to grant her the custody of London-bridge for six years. Before the term was expired, the citizens found their new-built bridge was suffering great injury, "for," they declared, in their supplication to the king, "the said lady queen taketh all the tolls, and careth not how the bridge is kept."[1] The very first patent granted by Edward I. in the first year of his reign, is the concession of her dower to his royal mother. This document, which is still preserved among the patent rolls in the Tower, is entituled,—"Ample assignation of a dowry to Alianora, queen of England, mother of the king." There are also patents granted to her in the eighth and eighteenth years of the reign of Edward I.

Eleanor lost her husband and both her daughters in one year; for scarcely had the tomb closed over the mortal remains of her royal lord, ere she was called upon to mourn the death of her eldest daughter, Margaret queen of Scotland. This lady had come to pay her mother a dutiful visit of condolence on the death of the king her father, and died in England in the thirty-third year of her age, and the twenty-second of her marriage, leaving only one daughter, who was married to Eric, king of Norway. The death of the queen of Scotland was followed by that of her sister, the duchess of Bretagne, who came, with her lord, to witness the coronation of her royal brother Edward, and died very unexpectedly a few days afterwards, in the thirtieth year of her age, greatly lamented by her illustrious consort, and by her mother queen Eleanor. Matthew of Westminster says she was a princess of great beauty and wit.[1]

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[1] Stowe's London.

Queen Eleanor and Edward I. preserved a great regard for the duke of Bretagne after the decease of lady Beatrice. There is a letter in the second volume of the Fœdera, from Eleanor, during her widowhood, to the king her son, in which she appears to take a lively interest in the welfare of her son-in-law. It is thus headed,—

"*Letter of Alianora, the Mother of the King, for John Duke of Bretagne, while travelling in a far Country.*[2]

"Alianor, by the grace of God, queen of England, to the king our son, health with our benison.

"Inasmuch, as our son, John of Bretagne, is in a foreign land, and requires of me as his mother, and you as his lord, some recommendation, our sir John de Maurre (his seneschal in England) ought to go to La Doure quickly to hear certain tidings of his lord. We pray and require that you would grant this, as *my* sir Nicol de Stapleton can attend to his wants in this country, and we wish that you would send your letter by him, as he will understand it, for he will not go without your especial command; and we pray you that you will do it quickly, and if you will please to give the power by your letter that he may have *attorne*[1] where he pleases, the same as you granted to the sire de Dreux, his brother.

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[1] There is a letter in the first volume of the Fœdera, from Blanche duchess of Bretagne, the mother-in-law of this princess, addressed to Henry III., in which there is affectionate mention made of Beatrice and her eldest son. We transcribe the letter, as affording one of the earliest specimens of familiar correspondence between royal personages in the middle ages. After the usual superscription to her very high and very dear lord Henry, by the grace of God king of England, &c. &c., she commences:—" Sire, I pray you that you will be pleased to inform us of your state, which may our Lord of his grace make always good; for know, my dear lord, that I have great joy at all times in having good news of you.—Know, sire, that my lady Beatrice, your dear daughter and ours, is still sick of her fever, but is much better, God be thanked, and her physicians tell us that her fever cannot last long.—I pray you, my dear lord, if we have any thing in our parts that you would like me to send, to inform me; for know, sire, that I shall have very great joy if I can do any thing for you. And know, sire, that Arthur is good and very beautiful, God be thanked! Our Lord have you in his care." This letter is dated 1265, and is written in old French. There is also a letter in Latin, from the young duchess Beatrice to the king her father, on the same page of the Fœdera, written at the time of this illness, which she says is "a quartan fever or ague," and she entreats her father "not to distress himself on account of her indisposition." She had six children by the duke of Bretagne, with whom she lived happily twelve years. She was buried in the church of the Grey Friars.

[2] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. ii. p. 221.

"And excuse sir John de Maurre that he cannot make his *congé* to you before he departs, for he cannot do it on account of haste. We commend you to God.

"Given at Lutgershall, 8th day of October."

It is probable that Eleanor was suffering from some kind of sickness in the year 1275, for we find in the Fœdera a protection granted by Edward I. "to master William, the Provençal *physico* to the queen-mother, whom the said queen had procured to come to her from beyond seas." It is especially provided, in this protection, "that the Provençal physician is to be left in quiet at all times and places, save that he is to be answerable for any debts that he may contract in this country." It has been generally asserted that Eleanor of Provence entered the nunnery of Ambresbury soon after the coronation of her son Edward I.; but this does not appear to have been the case, for several of her precepts and letters are dated from Waltham, Guildford, Lutgershall. and other places.[2] She retired to Ambresbury as a residence in 1280, having made up her mind to embrace a religious life; but delayed her profession till she could obtain leave from the pope to retain her rich dower as queen-dowager of England.[3] There is an original letter from queen Eleanor to her son, king Edward, dated from Waltham:—

"Alianora, by the grace of God, queen of England, to our dear son the king, health and our blessing.

"We have sent your prayer to the king of France, that he may lend his aid in purchasing our share of the land of Provence.[4] We have done the letter for you which you sent to us, and we pray you to hear it read, and if it please you, have it sealed; and if not, that you would be pleased to command it to be amended, and sent forthwith to your aunt, my lady of France. We also entreat you that you would send to mestre Bonet, your clerk, that he would show and advance this request in the court of France as much as he can. We commend you to God.

"Given at Waltham, 8th day of July, 1282."

The four younger sons of queen Eleanor, Richard, John, William, and Henry, all died before the king their father; so that, of her nine children, two sons only were surviving at the time she retired to Ambresbury. In the year 1280, her son king Edward visited her there, when he was on his march to Wales. Queen Eleanor then showed him a man who said he had received his sight through the miraculous interposition of the late king Henry III., in consequence of having offered up prayers at his tomb. Edward, whose sound judgment taught him to regard the legend with the contempt its falsehood merited, entreated his mother not to bestow her patronage on a base impostor, whom a prince of his father's piety and justice would certainly rather have punished with loss of speech for his hypocrisy than restored to sight, had he indeed possessed the power of doing either.[1]

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[1] Suppose attorney-letters of pecuniary credit.

[2] Rymer, vol. ii.

[3] T. Wikes. Annals of Waverley.

[4] From this letter it appears that the surviving co-heiresses of Provence, of whom our Eleanor was one, compounded their rights for money to their young sister, who by the will of their father Berenger, was to succeed to the sovereignty of that district.

The following letter to the king, her son, shows how keen a regard the royal recluse had to her own interest, and the jealous vigilance with which she watched the proceedings of her Provençal kindred :—

> "Elianor, by God's grace queen of England, to our dear son Edward, by the same grace king of England, health and our blessing.
>
> "Know, sweet son, that we have understood that a marriage is in agitation between the son of the king of Sicily and the daughter of the king of Germany; and if this alliance is made, we may be disturbed in the right that we have to the fourth part of Provence, which thing would be great damage to us, and this damage would be both ours and yours. Wherefore we pray and require you, that you will specially write to the said king, that since Provence is held from the empire, (and his dignity demands that he should have right done to us about it,) he will regard the right we have, and cause us to hold it. Of this thing we especially require you, and commit you to God.[2]

Richard earl of Cornwall, usually called Richard king of the Romans, or Richard of Almaine, is the person whose alliance with her brother-in-law, Charles king of Sicily, had excited the jealousy of Eleanor of Provence. The marriage never took place, whether on account of the jealousy of queen Eleanor regarding the safety of her slice of Provence, or that death claimed the only daughter of Richard[3] as bride, is not ascertained. Eleanor was at this time much harassed in mind regarding her native dominions, for, in another letter to her son, she complains that "Our sister Margaret, my lady of France, has been trespassing where she ought not in Provence." Queen Eleanor constantly received the tenderest attention and respect from her son king Edward, who regarded her with great affection; and once, when he was going to France to meet the king his cousin, on a matter of the greatest importance, and had advanced as far as Canterbury on his journey, receiving intelligence of the sudden and alarming illness of his mother, he instantly gave up his French voyage, and hastened to her.

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[1] M. Westminster. T. Wikes.

[2] Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies, vol. i. p. 51.

[3] Mentioned in Burke's Extinct Peerage. No marriage can be traced of this lady.

The long-delayed profession of the royal widow took place in the year 1284, when, says her eloquent contemporary, Wikes, "she deposed the diadem from her head and the precious purple from her shoulders, and with them all worldly ambition." Matthew of Westminster records her profession in these words:—"That generous virago, Ælianora queen of England, mother of the king, took the veil and religious habit at Ambresbury, on the day of the translation of St. Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, having obtained leave of the pope to keep possession of her dower in perpetuity, according to her wish." Two young princely probationers in the early flower of their days, Mary, fifth daughter of Edward I., and Eleanor daughter of the deceased duchess of Bretagne, approached the altar with their world-weary grandame queen Eleanor, and demanded permission to devote themselves to a religious life, through her persuasions as it was supposed; they were veiled at the same time and place with her.

After queen Eleanor's profession, her uncle, Philip earl of Savoy, applied to her and her son, king Edward, requesting them to choose from among his nephews a successor to his dominions, as he was himself childless, and distracted by the intrigues and quarrels of the rival claimants.[1] There is a long letter in the Fœdera on this subject, addressed jointly to Eleanor, the queen-mother, and king Edward her son, by the dying earl, in which he entreats them to decide for him, and "declares that his bishops and nobles are willing to recognise whomsoever they may think proper to appoint for his heir."

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol ii.

Queen Eleanor was, in the following year, named as executor to Philip of Savoy's last will and testament, jointly with her son, king Edward. The testator, with many compliments to "the wisdom, prudence, affection, and more than that, the good faith and probity of the queen and her son, commits the disposal of all his personal property to be by them divided between all his nephews and nieces."[1] It appears that Amadeus, the son of the deceased Thomas of Savoy, earl of Flanders, was the sovereign chosen by queen Eleanor and her son, king Edward, to succeed to the dominions of her dying uncle.

When Eleanor's life was fast ebbing away, and she lay moaning with pain on her sick-bed, it is recorded that she gave excellent counsel to her son, regarding a very perplexing affair which had just happened at his court. Edward had given refuge to a state-prisoner, who had escaped from the Châtelet in Paris. This Frenchman was a literary character, and named Thomas de Turbeville. It turned out that Turbeville was in reality a spy, a clerk of the king's council having intercepted a letter, in which the ungrateful man described the best place for seizing king Edward, and taking him prisoner to France. Turbeville, being fully convicted of treason, was condemned to be executed; "but," says Piers, from whom we draw the story, "he had dread to die," and sent the king word that he was willing to confess who had instigated the crime, as several great men at court were implicated in the attempt. Thomas was therefore respited, till the king's pleasure was known. The dutiful monarch was watching by the bedside of his aged mother when the message was delivered, "that a confession regarding accomplices, usually extorted by torture, was voluntarily offered by Thomas, surnamed Troubletown," the literal interpretation of the name of Turbeville. But the dying queen-mother seeing, perhaps, the things of this world by the light of that which was approaching, offered advice full of wisdom on the subject:—

"At Ambresbury the king with his moder was,
When to him came tiding of Troubletown Thomas.

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. ii

"They told him a deal Thomas would say to him,
To warn him full well which were his traitors grim.
His moder Eleanore abated her great bale,[1]
'Son,' said she, 'never more trow the traitor's tale:
Traitors such as he for hate will make a lie,
And through each word will be vengeance and felony.
Son, on my blessing, trow you not his saw,
But let him have ending as traitor by law.'"

Edward took this wise advice, and Turbeville died without his confession being required,—a proceeding which saved the king from many tormenting suspicions regarding the fidelity of his servants.

Among the royal letters preserved with the Tower records, occurs another from "the Ladye of gay Provence," after she had become the humble nun of Ambresbury. The queen-mother was, nevertheless, still a power which was invoked by her order when their privileges were in danger. The great convent of the Benedictines at Fontevraud, of which Ambresbury was a branch, had entreated their royal penitent to prefer the following petition to her son. The original is written in Norman French, and the style is *naïve* and familiar, like all this queen's other epistles.

"ELINOR, QUEEN-DOWAGER, TO EDWARD I.[2]

"To the most noble prince and our dearest son Edward, by God's grace king of England, lord of Ireland, and duke of Guienne, Elinor, humble nun of the order of Fontevraud, of the convent of Ambresbury, health and our blessing.

"Sweetest son, our abbess of Fontevraud has prayed us that we would entreat the king of Sicily to guard and preserve the franchises of her house, which some people wish to damage: and because we know well that he will do much more for your prayer than he will for ours, (for you have better deserved it,) we pray you, good son, that for love of us you will request and specially require this thing from him, and that he will command that the things which the abbess holds in his lordship may be in his guard and protection, and that neither she nor hers may be molested or grieved.

"Good son, if it please you, command that the billet be hastily delivered. We wish you health in the sweet Jesus, to whom we commend you."

Charles king of Sicily, possessing a portion of Provence in right of Beatrice, queen Eleanor's sister, the widely-spreading dependencies of Fontevraud in that country, felt some apprehension lest this rapacious prince should not prove good lord to them. Hence the application made to the royal votaress, who was veiled in their great English convent.

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[1] Ceased from moaning with pain.

[2] Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies, by M. A. E. Wood, vol. i. p. 59.

Eleanor's next epistle to her son bears a more general interest than the conventual supplication: it is an entreaty that the mother of one of the royal wards may see her son. This letter is likewise one of those lately discovered among the Tower records. The original is in Norman French.

"ELINOR, QUEEN-DOWAGER, TO EDWARD I.[1]

"To the most noble prince and her very dear son Edward, by God's grace king of England, lord of Ireland, and duke of Aquitaine, Elinor, humble nun of the order of Fontevraud, of the convent of Ambresbury, wishes health and her blessing.

"Sweetest son, we know well how great is the desire that a mother has to see her child when she has been long away from him, and that dame Margaret Neville, companion [consort] of master John Giffard, has not seen for a long time past her child, who is in the keeping of dame Margaret de Weyland, and has a great desire to see him.

"We pray you, sweetest son, that you will command and pray the aforesaid Margaret de Weyland, that she will suffer that the mother may have the solace of her child for some time, after her desire.

"Dearest son, we commend you to God. Given at Ambresbury the fourth day of March."

The heart which prompted this pretty simple appeal, however purified from the vanities of the world, evidently retained its human sympathies. The charities of Eleanor, too, were exemplary: every Friday she distributed from her convent 5*l.* in silver among the poor.[2] It ought to be remembered, for the better appreciation of this conduct, that the destitute in those days had no support but conventual alms.

Eleanor of Provence survived the king her husband nineteen years. She died at the nunnery of Ambresbury, June 24th, during the absence of her son in Scotland. Thomas Wikes thus records the particulars of her death and burial, in his Latin chronicle: "The fleeting state of worldly glory is shown by the fact, that the same year carried off two English queens, wife and mother of the king, both inexpressibly dear to him. The nuns of Ambresbury not being able to sepulture the queen-mother with sufficient magnificence, had her body embalmed, so that no corruption ensued, and in a retired place reverentially deposited it, till Edward returned from his Scottish campaign. On the king's return, he summoned all his clergy and barons to Ambresbury, where he solemnly completed the entombing of his mother, on the day of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary, in her conventual church, where her obsequies were reverently celebrated. But the heart of his mother king Edward carried with him to London, —indeed, he brought there the hearts of both the queens;[1] and, on the next Sunday, the day of St. Nicholas, before a vast multitude, they were honourably interred, the conjugal heart in the church of the Friars Preachers, and the maternal heart in that of the Friars Minors,[2] in the same city."

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[1] Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies, by M. A. E. Wood, vol. i. p. 61, (French).

[2] Chron. Lanercost, quoted ibid.

Among the parliamentary rolls we meet with a remarkably pitiful petition from the converted Jews, patronised "by dame Alianor, companion of king Henry III.," setting forth, "That their converts had been promised two hundred and two pounds and four-pence from the exchequer for their sustenance, which had not been received by them; and that the poor converts prayed their lord, king Edward I., to grant the same, seeing that the said poor converts prayed indefatigably for the souls of the late king Henry and the queen Eleanor, his companion, on whom God have mercy; therefore they hope the said sum may be paid by the treasurer for the sustenance of the converts. For God's sake, sire, take pitie!" is the concluding sentence of this moving supplication.

Queen Eleanor survived to see the conquest of Wales, and the contract of marriage between her grandson, Edward of Caernarvon, the heir of England, and her great-grandaughter Margaret, the heiress of Scotland and Norway, through which a peaceful union of those realms with England, Ireland, Wales, Aquitaine, and Ponthieu was contemplated; an arrangement which promised to render her descendants the most powerful sovereigns in Europe.

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[1] This implies that he had carried the heart of his beloved consort with him to Scotland.

[2] Commonly called the Minories. Those authors are mistaken who say she is buried in St. Edward's chapel; there is no memento of her in Westminster-abbey.

ELEANORA OF CASTILE.

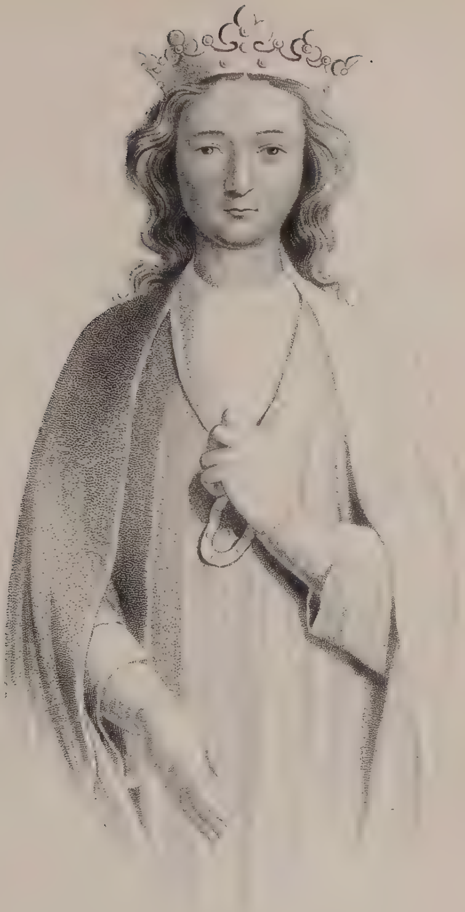
SURNAMED THE FAITHFUL,

FIRST QUEEN OF EDWARD I.

Eleanora infanta of Castile—Descent—Inheritance—Marriage-treaty—Queen-mother and prince Edward visit Spain—Eleanora's marriage at Burgos—Festival—Eleanora's journey to England—Eleanora retires to France—Returns to England—Sons born—Crusade—Eleanora prepares to share it—Arrives at Acre—Edward's wound—Assassin—Grief of Eleanora—Prince Edward's illness—His will—Birth of Joanna of Acre—Death of Eleanora's sons—Of king Henry—Queen Eleanor visits Rome—Birth of an heir at Maine—Providential escape of king and queen—Land at Dover—Coronation—War—Marriage of Llewellyn—Eleanora assists at nuptials—War renewed—Eleanora shares Edward's campaigns—Keeps court at Rhuddlan—Princess born in Wales—Caernarvon-castle—Queen's chamber—The Eagle tower—Birth of prince Edward—Death of prince Alphonso—Queen at Guienne—Birth of younger daughters—Queen's plate—Edward departs for the north—Eleanora follows him—Sudden death—King returns—His extreme grief—Follows her corpse—Solemn mourning—Burial—Tomb—Epitaph—Crosses to Eleanora's memory—Traits of the times—Eleanora's improvements—Her creditors—Prayers for her soul—Her children.

THE marriage of the infanta donna Eleanora of Castile with prince Edward, heir of England, happily terminated a war which her brother, king Alphonso, surnamed 'the Astronomer,'[1] was waging with Henry III., on account of some obsolete claims the Castilian monarch laid to the province of

[1] He was the celebrated royal philosopher who invented the Alphonsine tables of astronomy. His countrymen called him, Il Sabio, or 'the Wise.'



Gascony.[1] Alphonso had invaded Guienne, but, contrary to his usual fortune, Henry III. had the best of the contest, and the royal Castilian was glad to make overtures for peace. Henry, who had not the least gall of bitterness in his composition, and was always more willing to promote a festival than continue a fray, luckily recollected that Alphonso had a fair young sister to dispose of, whose age would just suit his heir, prince Edward. He therefore despatched his private chaplain, the bishop of Bath, with his secretary, John Mansel, from Bourdeaux, to demand the hand of the young infanta, as a pledge of her brother's placable intentions. These ambassadors speedily returned with don Alphonso's consent, inscribed in a scroll sealed with gold.[2] Alphonso stipulated that the English prince should come to Burgos, to receive the hand of his bride, five weeks before Michaelmas-day, 1254; otherwise the contract should be null and void. The stipulation was not unreasonable, for both the mother and grandmother of the bride had been long engaged to English princes who had broken their troth.

The king of Castile was but half-brother to the young donna Eleanora. She was the daughter of Ferdinand III. of Castile, by Joanna countess of Ponthieu, who had been many years before contracted to Henry III., king of England. Joanna inherited Ponthieu from her grandmother,—that princess Alice of France, whose betrothment with Richard Cœur de Lion, in the preceding century, had involved Europe in war. Eleanora, as the sole descendant of these princesses, was heiress-presumptive to Ponthieu and Montrieul, which provinces the royal widow of Castile, her mother, retained in her own possession. When the preliminaries of the marriage were settled, the queen of England, Eleanor of Provence, set out for Bourdeaux with her son prince Edward; and from thence travelled across the Pyrenees with him to Burgos, where they arrived August 5th, 1254, within the time limited by the royal astronomer. A stately festival was held in the capital of Castile, in honour of the nuptials of the young infanta with the heir of England. At a tournament given by king Alphonso, the prince received knighthood from the sword of his brother-in-law. Edward was just fifteen, and the princess some years younger,[1] at the time of their espousals.

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[1] He pretended that Henry II. had settled this province on his daughter Eleanora, queen of Castile.

[2] Preserved in the Chapter-house at Westminster.

After the chivalric festivities at Burgos had ceased, queen Eleanor re-crossed the Pyrenees, accompanied by her son and young daughter-in-law. King Henry waited at Bourdeaux to receive his son's bride.[2] He had prepared so grand a festival for the reception of the young infanta, that he expended three hundred thousand marks on her marriage-feast, to the indignation of his English peers. When one of them reproached him for this extravagance, the king replied, in a dolorous tone: "Oh! for the head of God say no more of it, lest men should stand amazed at the relation thereof!"

Henry settled on the prince, his heir, all the Aquitanian domains inherited from Eleanor, his grandmother; he likewise created him prince of Wales, with an exhortation to employ his youth in conquering the principality, of which he had, rather prematurely, assumed the title, together with that of Guienne. One thousand pounds per annum was the dower settled on the young Eleanora, in case the prince should die before his father. Prince Edward and his bride returned to Guienne after this renowned festival, in 1254. The young princess accompanied the royal family to Paris: she was lodged in the Temple, where Henry III. gave that celebrated banquet to St. Louis, mentioned in the preceding biographies as 'the feast of kings.' Henry ordered a suite of rooms to be fitted up for his daughter-in-law in the castle of Guildford; his directions particularly specify that her chamber is to have glazed windows, a raised hearth, a chimney, a wardrobe, and an adjoining oratory, or oriel.[3]

When Henry III. was preparing to invade Scotland, to avenge the affronts his daughter had received from Ros and Baliol, he was apprized that the infant don Sancho, archbishop-elect of Toledo, (half-brother to Eleanora,) with don Garcias Madinez, were on their way to England. They were lodged in the new Temple: the walls of their apartments were hung from their travelling stores by their attendants with silk and tapestry, and the floors covered with rich carpets,—the first time such luxuries were ever seen in England. The Spanish visitors were the *avant-couriers* of young Eleanora, who came for the first time to England the beginning of October. She landed at Dover, with a great retinue and a very scanty wardrobe.[1] She was not accompanied by her husband: her father-in-law, Henry III., sent her one hundred marks to purchase what she needed; he likewise sent her a handsome palfrey. He charged Reginald de Cobham, castellan of Dover, to receive her, lodge her at the castle with all honour, and escort her in person to London, requesting she would tarry at Canterbury on the road, and celebrate the feast of St. Edward. He sent her, very providently, for that purpose a silver alms-dish and two gold brooches, with several silken palls or coverlets, as offerings at the shrine of Saint Thomas, and other shrines on her road.[2] Eleanora arrived in London on Sunday, October 17, 1255. The king, his nobles, the lord mayor and citizens, went out in solemn procession to meet her, and the city was hung with coloured cloth wherever she passed. When she arrived at Westminster, she found her apartments, through the care of her brother the archbishop, hung with costly tapestry, "like a church; and carpeted after the Spanish fashion."[3] This was the first time tapestry had been seen in England devoted to any use but adorning a church on high festivals. Though the citizens had received the Spanish princess "with songs, music, and other joyful devices," they soon began to be offended at such luxury; and the Spaniards in the train of the young Eleanora were viewed as invidiously as the Provençal attendants of her mother-in-law.[4] They affirmed that Eleanora's countrymen were the very refuse of mankind, hideous in their persons, and contemptible in their dress and manners;[1] and among their other iniquities, they kept few horses and many mules. Thus the national prejudices on Eleanora's first arrival in England were strongly against her: not only did they revile the connexions of the young princess, but they pronounced the characters of her husband's household to be of the worst description,—Matthew Paris adding, "that prince Edward's train often robbed pack-horses and merchants who travelled with money; and that the prince himself was cruel, and so rapacious as to be deemed scarcely honester than his men,"—a character in curious coincidence with the traditions regarding his descendant Henry V., when prince of Wales. Edward came to England about a month after the arrival of his young spouse, landing from Guienne November 29.[2]

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[1] She is mentioned by all chroniclers as a very young girl. Piers of Langtoft, her contemporary, speaks of her as a child. Her age seems about ten, at this period. Robert of Gloucester, Piers, and Matthew Paris are the authorities for the events of this marriage.

[2] Matthew Paris.

[3] Stowe's London.

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[1] Liber de Antiquis Legibus, MS. Harl. 690.

[2] M. Paris, 783.

[3] Close Rolls of Henry III.

[4] Liber de Antiquis Legibus, quoted by B. Botfield, esq.

Prince Edward and his young bride passed over to Bourdeaux in 1256; and while Eleanora was completing her education, the young prince led the wandering life of a knight-errant, "haunting tournaments" wherever they were given. He was at Paris, tilting at a very grand jousting-match, in 1260, when news was brought him of the violent dissensions between the English barons and his father, which led to the fearful civil war that convulsed England for more than three years. During the whole of that disastrous era his young princess resided in France with the rest of the royal family, either with queen Marguerite of France, or with her own mother at Ponthieu.

After the heroic efforts of prince Edward had freed his father and restored him to his throne, and the country breathed in peace after the dreadful strife at Evesham, the royal ladies of England ventured to return. On the 29th of October, 1265, Eleanor of Provence, queen of England, with her daughter-in-law, Eleanora of Castile, landed at Dover,[3] where they were received by Henry III. and prince Edward; from thence they were escorted to Canterbury, where the royal party was magnificently entertained by the archbishop.

Prince Edward had left his wife an uninformed girl; she was now a lovely young woman of twenty, to whose character the uncertainty of fortune had assuredly given a favourable bias. The prince conveyed his restored wife to St. John's, Smithfield, after a magnificent welcome by the citizens. Eleanora afterwards removed to the Savoy-palace,[1] which had been originally built by count Peter of Savoy, her husband's uncle, and afterwards purchased by Eleanor of Provence, as a London inn or residence for the younger branches of her family. This was the abode of Eleanora of Castile when she attended the court at Westminster, but her favourite residences were the castle of Windsor, and her own dower-castle of Guildford.

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[1] M. Paris, 783.

[2] Botfield's Manners and Household Expenses of England, lxix.

[3] Wikes.

The memory of Eleanor's court at Guildford is preserved in one of the oldest of the English historical ballads, 'Adam o' Gordon,' which, if not quite as ancient as the days of Henry III., is nevertheless purely based on the narrations of the Latin contemporary chroniclers, Wikes and Hemmingford; indeed, as to fact, it is but the history, versified with some poetical ornament, of prince Edward's encounter with the Provençal outlaw in the woods near Guildford: his fierce combat, his generous pardon of the Gordon, were incidents that occurred during Eleanora's residence at Guildford-castle; and to his princess the heir of England brought the man he had conquered, both in mind and person.

"Prince Edward hath brought him to Guildford-tower
   Ere that summer's day is o'er,
He hath led him to the secret bower[2]
   Of his wife, fair Elianore.
His mother, the 'ladye of gay Provence,'
   And his sire the king were there;
Oh, scarcely the Gordon dared advance
   In a presence so stately and fair!

But the prince hath kneeled at his father's feet,
   For the Gordon's life he sues;
This princess so fair hath joined in the prayer,
   And how can king Henry refuse?
Can he his own dear son withstand,
   So dutiful, brave, and true,
And the loveliest lady in all the land[3]
   Kneeling before him too?

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[1] Grafton. Stowe.

[2] Private boudoir.

[3] Eleanora of Castile.

'My children arise,' the old king said,
  And a tear was in his eye,
He laid his hand on the prince's head,
  And he blessed him fervently:
'With a joyful heart I grant your prayer,
  And I bid the Gordon live;
Oh! the happiest part of a monarch's care,
  Is to pity and to forgive.'

Then spake the queen[1] so fair and free,
  'The Gordon I will make
The steward of my royal house,
  For these dear children's sake.'"

The eldest son of Eleanora of Castile was born at Windsor the year after her return to England; he was named John, after his great-grandfather king John, of evil memory. In the succeeding year, 1266, Eleanora gave birth at Windsor to a princess named Eleanora, and the year after to prince Henry. The beauty of these children, and their early promise, so much delighted their royal grandfather, that he greatly augmented the dower of the mother.

Prince Edward took up the cross in 1269, and his virtuous princess resolved to share the perils of his Syrian campaign. Before she departed from England, she accompanied her mother-in-law in a grand progress to various shrines. During the royal progress to Northampton, the princess Eleanora made a pilgrimage to Dunstable, in company with queen Eleanor, and offered at the shrine of St. Peter an altar-cloth of gold brocade, as a thanksgiving for the health of her children. On her return, she assisted at a magnificent convocation of the barons of England in Westminster-hall, where they swore fealty and kissed the hand of her little son prince John, and recognised him as his father's successor, in case of the death of Edward in the ensuing crusade. In vain did the ladies of Eleanora represent to her the hardships and dangers ever attendant on a crusade, for death on the Asiatic coast threatened in many forms beside the sword. The princess replied in words that well deserve to be remembered and noted: "Nothing," said this admirable lady, "ought to part those whom God hath joined; and the way to heaven is as near, if not nearer, from Syria as from England, or my native Spain."[1]

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[1] Eleanor of Provence.

A contemporary historian[2] has left us a very graphic portrait of the husband of Eleanora at this period of his life. "He was a prince of elegant form, and majestic stature, so tall that few of his people reached his shoulder. His ample forehead and prominent chest added to the dignity of his personal appearance. His arms were most agile in the use of the sword, and his length of limb gave him a firm seat on the most spirited horses. His hair was light before his eastern campaigns, but became dark in middle life. His left eyebrow had a slightly oblique fall, giving a shade of resemblance to his father's face, in whose portrait this defect is very strongly marked. The speech of Edward was sometimes hesitating, but when animated was passionately eloquent." His disposition, which Eleanora of Castile had the sole merit of softening and reforming, was naturally a fiery one, but generous when opposition ceased.[3]

Much has been said regarding the conjugal fidelity of prince Edward. But previously to his Syrian campaign he was impetuous and wilful in character, and far from a faultless husband. He had inspired the earl of Gloucester with mad jealousy,[4] who not only accused him of criminal intimacy with his countess, but declared that he, the earl of Gloucester, had been poisoned by the agency of prince Edward and the faithless spouse. It is to be feared that this lady was a great coquette, as she had previously been exercising her powers of fascination on the old king, according to the curious letter in the Wakefield tower, recently discovered, from Marguerite queen of France, expressing uneasiness, for her sister's sake, at the intimacy between Henry III. and the countess.[1] The scandal regarding prince Edward's attention to her had commenced before the return of Eleanora to England in 1264, but its effects convulsed the court with broils, till the princess left it and all its turmoils in the spring of 1270. At this time she bade farewell to the two lovely boys she never saw again, and sailed for Bourdeaux, where she superintended the preparations for the crusade campaign.[2]

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[1] Camden's Remains.

[2] Hemmingford.

[3] Walsingham relates a circumstance of prince Edward, which took place before the Syrian campaign; it is an anecdote that casts some light on his character. "Hawking one day on a river, he saw one of his barons not attending to a falcon that had just seized a duck among the willows. Prince Edward upbraided him for his neglect; and the noble tauntingly replied, 'It was well for him that the river parted them.' Stung by the remark, the prince plunged into the stream, though ignorant of its depth; and having with difficulty reached the opposite side, pursued the noble lord with his drawn sword, who, seeing escape hopeless, turned round his horse, flung off his cap, and advancing to Edward, threw himself on his mercy, and offered his neck to the blow. This submission disarmed the prince; he sheathed his sword, and rode home quietly with the offender."

[4] Stowe's Chronicle.

Edward sailed from Portsmouth about a month later, and met his consort at Bourdeaux; they proceeded to Sicily, where they sojourned during the winter, with the expectation that St. Louis, the king of France, would unite in the crusade. Soon after their arrival, tidings were brought of the death of St. Louis, at Tunis, and the discomfiture of his army. The king of Sicily, who was brother to St. Louis, and husband to Edward's aunt, endeavoured to persuade his royal guests to give up their crusading expedition; whereupon prince Edward struck his breast, and exclaimed with energy,—"*Sangue de Dieu!* if all should desert me,[3] I would lay siege to Acon, if only attended by Fowen, my groom!"

The following spring Edward and Eleanora arrived at Ptolemais. The prince made an expedition as far as Nazareth,[4] and put all the garrison to the sword; and when the Saracens came to the rescue, he engaged the infidel army, and defeated them with great slaughter. He won another battle, June 1271, at Cahow, and thus terminated his first and second campaigns. He returned to Cyprus for the winter, and, being reinforced by the Cypriots, undertook the siege of Acre the succeeding summer, still attended by his faithful Eleanora.

The emir of Joppa, who was the Saracen admiral, pretending that he was desirous of becoming a Christian convert, had sent a messenger several times with letters to the prince of England. This envoy was one of the agents of the Old Man of the Mountains, who kept a band for secret murders, called 'assassins.' After the cunning fanatic had created a confidence in Edward's mind by frequent messages, he was introduced into the royal chamber, bringing letters, for the fifth time, from the emir. The prince was indisposed from the heat of the climate, and was lying on his bed bareheaded, wearing only a white vest. The assassin gave him some letters to read, written on purpose to please the Christian prince. They were alone in the apartment, because the negotiation touched the life and honour of the admiral of Joppa, therefore secrecy was imperatively needful. The assassin pretended that he had another paper to deliver, but he drew out with it a poniard, and aimed a blow at the side of the prince as he lay before him on the bed. Fortunately Edward perceived the treachery, and, suddenly raising his arm, received the blow upon it. His assailant endeavoured to reiterate the stroke, but Edward, who seems not yet to have risen from his recumbent posture, felled him to the ground with a kick on the breast: again the traitor returned to the attack, and the prince finally killed him with a trestle, or stool, that stood by. The attendants, hearing the scuffle, came running in, and the prince's harper, or minstrel, beat out the assassin's brains; whereat the prince sternly reproached him, asking, "What was the use of striking a dead man?"

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[1] Fourth Report of the Records: it is among the collection of the Royal Letters in the Wakefield tower.

[2] Matthew of Westminster.

[3] W. Rishanger. M. Paris.

[4] Knolles' History of the Turks.

After some days, the prince's wounded arm began to show unfavourable symptoms, and the flesh blackening, exhibited signs of mortification; insomuch, that all about him began to look heavily upon each other. "Why whisper ye thus among yourselves?" said the prince; "what see ye in me? Tell the truth, and fear not." Then Hemmingford[1] narrates that the master of the Temple recommended incisions, which would be exquisitely painful. "If suffering," said the prince to the surgeon brought to him by the master of the Temple, "may again restore my health, I commit myself to you: work on me your will, and spare not."

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[1] Walter Hemmingford's Chronicle.

Eleanora was by his bedside at this dreadful crisis; she lost her firmness, and bewailed, with a passion of tears, the anguish about to be inflicted on her husband. Edward, with his usual decision of character, cut short the agony of his wife, by bidding his brother Edmund, and his favourite knight John de Vesci, carry the princess out of the room. They took her in their arms and bore her from the apartment, she shrieking and struggling all the time, till her brother-in-law told her, "That it was better that she should scream and cry, than all England mourn and lament."[1] The surgical operation was effectual; in fifteen days Edward was able to mount his horse, though his health was long in a precarious state. He always attributed his final recovery to the tender care and attention of Eleanora; but if there had been any truth in the story of her sucking the poison from his wound,[2] the narrators of the scene, who have entered into its details so minutely, would not have forgotten the circumstance.

While yet in ill health, prince Edward made his will.[3] With a philosophy rare at this era, he leaves his body to be buried wherever his executors please. To his principal executor, his brother-in-law and fellow-crusader, John duke of Bretagne, he leaves the guardianship of his children, if he should die before they come of age. He provides for the dowry of his dear wife Eleanora, but does not leave her either guardian to the realm in reversion, or to her children.

Scarcely was the prince recovered from his wound, when Eleanora brought into the world an infant princess, named Joanna, and called from the place of her birth Joanna of Acre.[4] The next remarkable event that happened at Acre, while Eleanora remained there with her royal lord, was, that a pope was chosen, in a manner, out of their household. Theobald, archbishop of Liege, who attended the royal pair on their crusade, was in his absence elected to the papal throne, which he ascended under the name of Gregory X. This pontiff had been the tutor of prince Edward.

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[1] Knighton and Hemmingford.

[2] The story is to be found quoted by Camden, but only as recorded by Sanctius, a Spanish historian, who lived a hundred and fifty years after the siege of Acre, and who introduced it in a comment he wrote on the works of Roderigo Toletus. This author does not bear the weight of Walter Hemmingford, who mentions Eleanora, but does not allude to this event.

[3] Sir Harris Nicolas. Testamenta Vetusta. Edward left no other will.

[4] This princess is the first instance of a misalliance in the royal house of Plantagenet. After the death of her first husband, she stole a match with one of his retainers, Ralph Monthermer, called by some authors his groom, but he was in reality his squire. Joanna was, in 1306, forgiven by her father, on account of the valour her second husband had shown in the Scottish wars. The bishop of Durham was the mediator in this reconciliation.

The army of the prince being reduced by sickness, want, and desertion, he considered that it was useless to tarry longer in Syria. Leaving behind him a reputation not inferior to that of his great uncle, Cœur de Lion, Edward turned his back most reluctantly on the Holy Land, and with his princess and her infant daughter arrived safely at Sicily, where heavy tidings awaited them. The news first reached them that prince John, their lovely and promising heir, whose talents were unequalled for his years, had died August 1, 1272. Scarcely had the princess and her husband received this intelligence, when they heard of the death of their second son, prince Henry; and a third messenger brought the news to Messina that king Henry III. was dead, and that prince Edward was now Edward I. of England. The firmness and resignation with which Eleanora and Edward bore the loss of their promising boys surprised every one at the Sicilian court; but when the prince heard of the death of his royal sire, he gave way to a burst of anguish so bitter, that his uncle[1] Charles of Anjou, king of Sicily, who was in company with him, astonished at his manner of receiving intelligence that hailed him king, asked him "How it was that he bore the loss of both his sons with such quiet resignation, and abandoned himself to grief at the death of an aged man?"[2] Edward made this memorable answer: "The loss of infants may be repaired by the same God that gave them; but when a man has lost a good father, it is not in the course of nature for God to send him another."

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[1] The husband of his mother's sister.

[2] Charles was not likely to be troubled with much sensibility, for while St. Louis was bitterly weeping for the death of their mutual brother, the count of Poitou, slain in their crusade, Charles, who was on ship-board, amused himself with playing at tric-trac all day long. When the king of France was informed of this hard-hearted way of spending the hours of mourning, he came softly behind his brother in the heat of his game, and seizing his backgammon-board, threw men, dice, and money into the sea. The humour with which the lord de Joinville (who saw the incident) relates this anecdote is irresistible

From Sicily queen Eleanora accompanied her royal husband to Rome, where they were welcomed and magnificently entertained by their friend, pope Gregory X. England, happy in the permanent settlement of her ancient representative government, now for the first time practically established since the reign of St. Edward, enjoyed such profound tranquillity, that her young king and queen were able to remain more than a year in their continental dominions. During this time the queen gave birth to another heir,[1] more beautiful and promising than either of his deceased brethren. The queen named him, after her beloved brother, Alphonso, a name which sounds strangely to English ears; but had this prince lived to wear the crown of his great father, it would, in all probability, have become as national to England as the names of Edward or George.[2] At this juncture the life of Edward was preserved, in a manner that he considered almost miraculous. As he was sitting with his queen on a couch, in their palace at Bourdeaux, a flash of lightning killed two lords who were standing directly behind them, without injuring the royal pair.[3]

Edward, with his queen, made a progress homeward through all his French provinces, tilting at tournaments as he went. Passing through Paris, he did homage to the king of France for Aquitaine and its dependencies, before he returned to assume the English crown.[4] The king and queen landed at Dover, August 2, 1273. All preparations had been made for their speedy coronation, which took place on the 19th of the same month. They were received in London with the utmost exultation. The merchants, enriched by peaceful commerce with the rich wine provinces of the South, showered gold and silver on the royal retinue as they passed under the windows of the Chepe.[5] Both houses of parliament assembled to welcome and do honour to their constitutional king and his virtuous consort.

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[1] Paulus Emilius. He was born Nov. 23, 1272.

[2] Alphonso is an abbreviation of Ildefonso, a native Iberian saint.

[3] Matthew Paris.

[4] Walsingham and Wikes.

[5] Edward brought in his train Guasco, a rebel Gascon baron, whom he had condemned to death; but his punishment seems to have been commuted by his

At the coronation of Edward and Eleanora, preparations were made for the exercise of the most profuse hospitality; the whole areas of the Palace-yards, old and new, were filled with wooden buildings,[1] open at the top, to let out the smoke of cooking. Here, for a whole fortnight, were prepared successions of banquets, served up for the entertainment of all comers, where the independent franklin, the stout yeoman from the country, and the rich citizen and industrious artisan from the metropolis, alike found a welcome, and were entertained gratuitously. Good order was general, and every one delighted with this auspicious commencement of the new reign. Edward and Eleanora were crowned by the hands of Robert Kilwardby, archbishop of Canterbury. One of the most extraordinary features of this coronation is recorded in an old black-letter manuscript chronicle:[2] "King Edward was crowned and anointed as right heir of England, with much honour and worship, with his virtuous queen; and after mass the king went to his palace, to hold a royal feast among all the peers that had done him honour and worship. And when he was set at his meat, king Alexander of Scotland came to do him service, and to worship with a *quentyse*,[3] and a hundred knights with him, horsed and arrayed. And when they were alight off their horses, they let their horses go whither they would, and they that could catch them had them to their own behoof. And after that came sir Edmund, the king's brother, a courteous knight and a gentleman of renown, and the earl of Gloucester. And after them came the earl of Pembroke and the earl of Warren, and each of them led a

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being exhibited, when the king entered London in state, with a rope about his neck. The poor captive expected nothing but death. He was forgiven the capital part of his offence by the act of indemnity at the coronation. He returned thanks to Edward on his knees. This must have made a most striking feature of that part of the ceremony. Guasco was afterwards a loyal friend and subject to Edward, whose mercy, however, was never extended with frankness to any but the natives of the south of France, as in the instance of Adam de Gordon. Edward treated them as countrymen, and their language was most familiar on his tongue.

[1] Ancient chronicle, quoted by Carte.

[2] Preserved by sir Robert Cotton. [3] A quaint device, or ingenious invention.

horse by their hand, and a hundred of their knights did the same. And when they were alight off their horses, they let them go wherever they would, and they that could take them had them still at their liking."

The coronation of Edward and Eleanora had been graced by the presence of the king of Scotland and the duke of Bretagne, but Llewellyn, prince of Wales, absented himself; upon which the king of England sent him a sharp message, "to know wherefore he did not tender homage at the late coronation of himself and queen?" Llewellyn refused to acknowledge that any homage was due: he was a victorious prince, for, taking advantage of the recent civil wars in England, he had reconquered all the territory which the Norman predecessors of Edward I. had wrested from the Welsh. The first mischance that befell the Welsh was the capture of the bride of Llewellyn,[1] coming from France; her vessel was seized by the Bristol merchantmen, who carried her prisoner to king Edward. This prince had not yet learned to behave with cruelty to women. The young damsel, though the daughter of Simon de Montfort, his mortal foe, whom he had slain in battle, was at the same time the child of his aunt, Eleanor Plantagenet. He received her with the courtesy of a kinsman, and consigned her to the gentle keeping of his queen, with whom she resided at Windsor-castle. Nor was Eleanor de Montfort the only one of Edward the First's kinswomen to whom the queen gave kindness and protection. A letter of hers has lately been found among the Tower records. It is addressed to Robert Burnell, her husband's private secretary: it was prompted by her friendship for Constance, the widow of the unfortunate Henry, son of Richard earl of Cornwall, Henry III.'s brother. The servants of Constance had been injured or aggrieved.[3]

"Eleanora, by God's grace queen of England, lady of Ireland, and duchess of Aquitaine, to lord Robert Burnell sends loving greeting.

"We require and affectionately entreat you to give counsel and assistance in this affair, that the transgression injuriously committed against the bearer of these presents, the servant of the lady Constance our cousin, (which master John

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[1] Walsingham. Powell's Welsh Chronicles.
[2] Milles' Catalogue of Honour. Wikes.
[3] Ibid.

Clavell will show you,) may be reasonably redressed. For the confidence which we have in your benevolence is the cause why we so often direct to you our prayers on behalf of our friends. And do you, for love of us, give such diligence in this affair, that we may henceforth be bound to you by special favour.

"Given at Guildford, xiiii. day of October."

The war with Wales lasted till 1278, when Llewellyn, finding it impossible to recover his bride by force of arms, submitted to the required homage, and queen Eleanora brought the lady Eleanor Montfort to Worcester, where king Edward bestowed his kinswoman upon Llewellyn, giving her away with his own royal hand; while his amiable queen supported her at the altar of Worcester cathedral, and graced the nuptial feast of prince Llewellyn with her presence. The prince and princess of Wales afterwards accompanied the king and queen to Westminster,[1] with a great retinue of malcontent Snowdon barons, and their vassals. After this pacification, the death of the queen of Castile caused the provinces of Ponthieu and Montrieul to devolve on her daughter, queen Eleanora, who quitted England with king Edward, in order to take possession of her inheritance, and do homage to the king of France.

Edward I. received from one of the dignitaries of the Temple, in France, a chessboard and chessmen made of jasper and crystal, which present he transferred to his queen, a circumstance which leads us to the conclusion that she was skilled in the noble game. An accident that happened to the prince just before the Syrian campaign proves that he was a chess-player. One day, when he was playing at chess at Windsor with a knight, the prince suddenly, from an impulse, rose from his game without any motive or decided purpose which he could define, even to himself; the next moment, the centre stone of the groined ceiling above him fell on the very spot where he had been sitting. From this accident he believed himself to be under the special protection of Providence, and reserved for some great purpose; he attributed his preservation to Our Lady of Walsingham.

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[1] The prince of Wales did homage in Westminster Hall. According to an ancient MS., translated by Carte in his History, the Snowdon barons who accompanied Llewellyn to England with their serfs were quartered at Islington, where they were anything but comfortable, taking great offence at the fare provided for them. They could neither drink the wine nor the ale of London; mead and Welsh ale could not be got for them; the English bread they refused to eat, and all London could not afford milk enough for their daily diet. They were indignant at the staring of the Londoners when they walked in the streets in their outlandish garb, and even suspected that the English took them for savages. "No," cried they in chorus, "we will never again visit Islington, excepting as conquerors." Droll as the association of ideas may be between the Welsh bards and Islington, the name of that harmless suburb was the constant refrain of the Welsh bards till Edward silenced them in death. As all the popular agitations were raised by the bards, who were perfectly frantic concerning the prophecies of Merlin at this crisis, their extirpation by Edward is a very probable circumstance, though contested by historians.

Eleanora of Castile was a patroness of literature.[1] In the curious library of St. Geneviève, in Paris, there is a treatise of religion called " Hierarchy," translated from Latin into French by John de Pentham, at her request and under her patronage.[2] Eleanora likewise paid forty shillings to Richard du Marche, for illuminating a psalter and two tablets with miniature pictures.[3]

The return of the royal pair was hastened by another Welsh war; for the fair bride of Llewellyn died, after bringing him a living daughter,[4] and the prince, urged by the songs of the bards, and the indignation of his subjects regarding his homage, suddenly invaded England. The ambiguous words of a prophecy of Merlin, asserting that a prince born in Wales should be the acknowledged king of the whole British island, was the stimulus that led to a war, terminating in the death of the brave Llewellyn. The gold coronet of the unfortunate prince, taken from his head by lord Mortimer after the fatal skirmish at Builth, was offered by prince Alphonso at the shrine of Edward the Confessor.

The unsettled state of Wales needed the constant presence of king Edward, to keep down the spirit of the people; a queen Eleanora, who had followed him in all his Welsh campaigns, kept her court at Rhuddlan-castle in the summer of 1283. Here her sixth daughter, the princess Isabella, was born a native of Wales.[1] Early in spring, 1284, Edward carried his queen to his newly-built castle of Caernarvon, a stronghold he had just finished to awe the insurgents of the principality. This truly royal fortress, according to the antiquary Pennant, appears at present, in its external state, precisely as when queen Eleanora first entered the stupendous gateway so many centuries ago. The walls are studded by defensive round towers; they have two principal gates, the east facing the Snowdon mountains, the west commanding the Menai. The entrance to the castle is very stately, beneath a noble tower, on the front of which appears the statue of the great Edward,[2] finely carved from the life, drawing a dagger with a stern air, as if menacing his unwilling subjects. This entrance had four portcullisses, and every requisite of strength.

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[1] Botfield, quoted in his Compotus of Eleanora of Castile.

[2] Warton is the authority for this fact, which, from my own inspection of the literary curiosities in that extraordinary library, is doubtless true; but Warton gives the name of the work barbarously, calling it 'Jerarchie.' The volume belonged to the Friars Minors of Southampton, and doubtless was carried to France at the dissolution of the monasteries.

[3] B. Botfield.

[4] This child, whose name was Guendolen, was brought to Edward a captive in her cradle: she was reared, and professed a nun in the convent of Sempringham with her cousin Gladis, the only daughter of prince David, brother to Llewellyn, which prince was executed by Edward. Thus ended the line of Roderick the Great.—Piers Langtoft. Piers mentions his personal acquaintance with these royal votaries.

To this mighty castle Edward brought Eleanora, at a time when her situation promised an increase to the royal family. The Eagle tower, through whose gate the affectionate Eleanora entered, is at a prodigious height from the ground at the farthest end, and could only be approached by a drawbridge, supported on masses of opposing rock. Every one who beholds it is struck with its grand position: it is still, by the tradition of the district, called 'queen Eleanor's gate;' nor was the Eagle tower an eyrie by any means too lofty for the security of the royal Eleanora and her expected infant, since most of the Snowdon barons still held out, and the rest of the principality was fiercely chafing at the English curb. This consideration justifies the tradition which, passing by the suite of apartments shown as the queen's, points out a little dark den, built in the thickness of the walls, as the chamber where the faithful queen gave birth to her son Edward. The chamber is twelve feet in length and eight in breadth, and is without a fire-place.[1] Its discomforts were somewhat modified by hangings of tapestry, of which some marks of tenters still appear in the walls.[2] Queen Eleanora was the first person who used tapestry as garniture for walls in England, and she never needed it more than in her dreary lying-in chamber at Caernarvon.[3] The prince was born April 25th, when fires were not indispensable in a small, close chamber. As a soldier's wife, used to attend her lord in all campaigns, from Syria to Scotland, the queen had, in all probability, met with far worse accommodations, than in the forlorn chamber in the Eagle tower.[4] The queen certainly provided a Welsh nurse for her infant:[1] she thus proved her usual good sense, by complying with the prejudices of the country.

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[1] Stowe.

[2] His noble portrait, engraved by Vertue in Carte, is taken from this statue.

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[1] Pennant and Boswell.

[2] It was the primitive office of the grooms of the chamber to hang up the tapestry, which was always carried in progress with the royal baggage, and sent forwards with the purveyor and grooms of the chamber; so that the queen found the stone walls of her sleeping chamber in comfortable order for her reception.

[3] Among the memorials of queen Eleanora's sojourn at Caernarvon-castle, the cradle of her infant son is still shown. It is hung by rings and staples to two upright pieces of wood, like a cot; it is of rude workmanship, yet with much pretence to ornament, having many mouldings, though the nails are left rough. It is made of oak, and is in length three feet two inches, its width one foot eight inches at the head, and one foot five at the feet; it has rockers, and is crowned by two birds,—whether doves or eagles antiquaries have not yet decided.—Boswell's Antiquities.

[4] A description of those apartments, by Mr. F. Williams, seems taken from the spot. "After ascending a flight of stairs (in the Eagle tower), the visitor gains admission to a circular chamber, an ante-room, through which he passes to another of larger dimensions: this is 'the queen's chamber,' and it has a fire-place, a rather capacious one, apparently coeval with the building. Beyond the queen's chamber is a room uniform in size with the other, and beyond this two smaller chambers; the most remote, steps descend to a passage leading to 'the king's tower,' while the ante-room leading to the queen's chamber forms a convenient entrance to her state apartments in the Eagle tower." This is a valuable picture of Eleanora's suite of rooms in Caernarvon-castle, as she afterwards enjoyed them, and it well agrees with the arrangements of all private apartments of royalty constructed in the middle ages. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider the state of Caernarvon-castle,—not commenced before the death of Llewellyn in 1282, and yet inhabited as a fortress early in the year 1284, far surpassing in celerity of erection Richard Cœur de Lion's castle of Galliard, built in one twelvemonth. But Richard's "saucy castle," as he called it, was built in the land of castle-building, with stores of Caen stone close at hand; neither did he need it as a lady's bower, to shelter a queen and infant son. The interior accommodations of Caernarvon-castle could scarcely have been finished for Eleanora's accommodation at her accouchement, a few months after this fortress was commenced, and this is why we cleave to the Welsh tradition, faithfully given by the Welsh antiquarian Pennant, who points out a small strong room as Eleanora's lying-in chamber.

Edward I. was at Rhuddlan-castle, negotiating with the despairing magnates of Wales, when news was brought him by Griffith Lloyd, a Welsh gentleman, that the queen had made him father of a living son of surpassing beauty. The king was transported with joy; he knighted the Welshman on the spot, and made him a magnificent donation of lands.[2] The king hastened directly to Caernarvon, to see his Eleanora and her boy; and three days after, the castle was the rendezvous of all the chiefs of North Wales, who met to tender their final submission to Edward I., and to implore him, as their lord-paramount, to appoint them a prince who was a native of their own country, and whose native tongue was neither French nor Saxon, which they assured him they could not understand.[3] Edward told them he would immediately appoint them a prince, who could speak neither English nor French. The Welsh magnates, expecting he was a kinsman of their own royal line, declared they would instantly accept him as their prince, if his character was void of reproach; whereupon the king ordered his infant son to be brought in and presented to them, assuring the assembly that "he was just born a native of their country; that his character was unimpeached; that he could not speak a word of English or French; and that, if they pleased, the first words he uttered should be Welsh." The fierce mountaineers little expected such a ruler: they had, however, no alternative but submission, and, with as good a grace as they might, kissed the tiny hand which was to sway their sceptre, and vowed fealty to the babe of the faithful Eleanora.[4]

The queen soon changed her residence to her magnificent palace of Conway-castle, where all the elegances of an age further advanced in luxury than is generally supposed, were assembled round her. Many traces of her abode at Conway exist: among others, her state bed-chamber retains some richness of ornament; it opens on a terrace commanding a beautiful view. Leading from the chamber is an arched recess, called by tradition 'queen Eleanora's oriel;' it is raised by steps from the floor, and beautifully adorned with painted glass windows. Here the queen of England, during her *levée*, or rising, sat to receive the ladies qualified to be presented to her, while her tirewoman combed and braided those long tresses[1] which are the glory of a Spanish donna, and which her statues show Eleanora of Castile to have possessed. A poem, contemporary with this queen, minutely describes these state-toilet places:[2]—

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[1] There is an entry in the household-book of Edward II. of twenty shillings, which the king presented to Mary of Caernarvon, his nurse, for coming all the way from Wales to see him.

[2] Pennant's Wales.

[3] Speed.

[4] Stowe minutely details this incident, the authenticity of which is not only supported by the local traditions of North Wales, but by the giant authority of Selden.

> "In her oriel there she was,
> Closed well with royal glass;
> Filled it was with imagery,
> Every window by and by."

The August following the birth of prince Edward saw the death of prince Alphonso, the heir of England,—an event which deeply afflicted his mother. The same year brought calamity to her brother, king Alphonso X. of Castile,[3] who was the most extraordinary person of his time; but wrapping himself up in his mathematical studies in the latter part of his reign, his son, Sancho the Brave, deposed him. This event was a source of great grief to Eleanora, for her royal brother was tenderly beloved by her; she had named her favourite child after him, and now, in his reverse of fortune, she urged her royal lord to interfere with her nephew Sancho[4] for the restoration of her brother. The interposition was in vain, for the learned Alphonso died in confinement.

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[1] This custom, derived from the middle ages, was continued in France till the Revolution. The word 'levee,' still used at our court, is derived from it.

[2] Pennant.

[3] This king, surnamed *Il Sabio*, employed the most learned men, not only Europeans, but Arabs and Jews, to assist him in constructing the celebrated Alphonsine tables, so long the standard of astronomical calculations, showing, withal, some glimpses of the light afterwards cast on science by Galileo and sir Isaac Newton. Alphonso paid his learned assistants forty thousand crowns for their services, a benefaction infinitely resented by his combative subjects, who took their monarch and his astronomers for conjurors, and were infuriated that a king should bestow treasure on any peaceful profession.–See Atlas Géographique. Alphonso pursued his studies in quiet when imprisoned, consoling himself by considering that his subjects were fools.

[4] Many papers on this subject appear in the Fœdera.

The death of king Alexander of Scotland, in 1285, opened a new prospect for still further aggrandizing the progeny of queen Eleanora. The heiress of Scotland, the princess Margaret of Norway, great niece to Edward I., was, by the consent of the nobles of Scotland, solemnly betrothed to Edward of Caernarvon, prince of Wales, and every prospect appeared that the island crowns would be happily united in the persons of the infant son of Eleanora and the little queen of Scotland. After this pacification of the whole island, the king and queen resided three years in Aquitaine. Eleanora then gave birth to her seventh and eighth daughters, the princesses Beatrice and Berengaria.

When the queen returned to England, she was urged to devote her fourth daughter, the princess Mary, to the cloister. Her reluctance to relinquish this child is noted by most chroniclers, and produced more than one pathetic epistle from dignitaries of the church on the impropriety of "withholding from heaven a chosen lamb from her numerous flock."[1] Among the other admirable qualities of Eleanora, we find freedom from the prejudices of her era. She kept a happy medium between the bold infidelity of her philosophic brother, Alphonso the mathematician,[2] and the superfluous devotion of the middle ages. The princess Mary was, however, veiled at the age of ten years, at Ambresbury, 1289. The year after her profession the queen added a ninth daughter, the princess Blanche, to her family. Eleanora reared and educated her numerous train of beautiful princesses in a retired angle of Westminster-palace, to which was given, on account of their residence there, the appellation of 'the Maiden-hall.'[3]

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[1] There are innumerable grants recorded in the Fœdera to the nun-princess. Her father grants the forest of Savernake, and other woodlands, for fire for her chamber; the port of Southampton is taxed for oil for her lamp, and for wine for her table.

[2] Alphonso is said to have declared, "that he could have devised a better way of ordering the movements of the celestial bodies:" this speech led to his deposition. The fact is, he was not satisfied with his own astronomical tables, and foresaw subsequent improvements.

[3] Brayley and Britton's Palace of Westminster, 114. This portion of the old palace was destroyed by fire, a little time after the queen's death.

Three of the queen's elder daughters were married, or betrothed, in 1290. The princess-royal, Eleanora, was affianced to Alphonso prince of Arragon: this prince died soon after, when she married the duke of Barr. The next sister, Joanna of Acre, in her eighteenth year, renowned for her beauty and high spirit, was married with great pomp at the monastery of the knights of St. John, Clerkenwell, to the premier peer of England, Gilbert the Red, earl of Gloucester. A few weeks later, queen Eleanora assisted at a still statelier ceremony, when her third daughter, Margaret, then fifteen, wedded at Westminster-abbey John, the second duke of Brabant.[1] The king, it has been observed, was subject to violent fits of rage in the earlier periods of his life. At the wedlock of his daughter Margaret, he gave one of his esquires a rap with his wand without just cause:[2] he paid him 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* as compensation, whether for the indignity or the injury is not noted.

Our historians dwell much on the magnificence displayed at the nuptials of these princesses. A list of the plate used in the queen's household will prove that the court of Eleanora had attained a considerable degree of luxury. The plate was the work of Ade, the king's goldsmith, and the description of the rich vessels furnished by this member of the goldsmiths' company has been brought to light by modern research.[3] Thirty-four pitchers of gold and silver, calculated to hold water or wine; ten gold chalices, of the value of 140*l.* to 292*l.* each; ten cups of silver gilt, or silver white, some with stands of the same, or enamelled; more than one hundred smaller silver cups, value from 4*l.* to 118*l.* each; also cups of jasper, plates and dishes of silver, gold salts, alms-bowls, silver hanapers or baskets; cups of benison, with holy sentences wrought thereon; enamelled silver jugs, adorned with effigies of the king in a surcoat and hood, and with two effigies of queen Eleanora. It is generally supposed that Tom Coryate, of queer memory, introduced the use of forks from Italy, so lately as the time of James I. But our Provençal Plantagenet queens did not feed with their fingers, whatever their English subjects might do, since in the list of Eleanora's plate occurs a pair of knives with silver sheaths, enamelled, with a *fork* of crystal, and a silver fork[1] handled with ebony and ivory. In the list of royal valuables were likewise combs and looking-glasses of silver-gilt, and a bodkin of silver in a leather case; five serpents' tongues set in a standard of silver; a royal crown set with rubies, emeralds, and great pearls; another with Indian pearls; and one great crown of gold, ornamented with emeralds, sapphires of the East, rubies, and large oriental pearls. This seems to have been Eleanora's state crown, used at the coronation feast. Above all, there is a gold ring with a great sapphire, wrought and set by no other hand but that of St. Dunstan.

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[1] The young duchess did not immediately quit England, but had a separate establishment, as appears by the following entry in Edward II.'s household-books: "Paid Robert de Ludham thirteen shillings and sixpence, who was porter to the king's daughter, the lady Margaret, duchess of Brabant, when she maintained a household different from the king's son."

[2] Botfield.

[3] By Mr. Herbert, City librarian, in his History of City Companies.

Eleanora's royal lord was not always cross and savage at festivities, given to rap heads with his wand,[2] or throw coronets behind the fire, a freak in which he afterwards indulged. The chronicles of 1290 record more than one merry scene which took place with the king and the queen's ladies. There is an old custom, still remembered in Warwickshire, called 'heaving.' On Easter-Monday, the women servants of every household clamorously enter the chamber or sitting-room of the master of the family, or any "stranger beneath his roof," and, seating him in a chair, lift him therein from the ground, and refuse to set him down till he compounds for his liberty by a gratuity. Seven of queen Eleanora's ladies, on the Easter-Monday of 1290, unceremoniously invaded the chamber of king Edward, and seizing their majestic master, proceeded to 'heave him' in his chair, till he was glad to pay a fine of fourteen pounds to enjoy "his own peace," and be set at liberty.[3] One day of the Easter holidays, the queen being then at her Waltham-palace, the king spied her laundress, Matilda of Waltham, among the lookers-on in the court-yard while the hounds were coupling and the gallant hunters mounting, most likely for the Londoners' Easter-hunt. Being in a merry mood, king Edward wagered a fleet hunter that Matilda could not ride hunting with them, and be in at the death of the stag. She accepted the bet, mounted the horse, and rode with such success, that Edward was fain to redeem his good steed for forty shillings.[1] A large Spanish ship came that summer to Portsmouth, from which the queen was supplied with some of her native fruits. She bought one frail of Seville figs, one of raisins, a bale of dates, two hundred and thirty pomegranates, fifteen citrons, and seven oranges.[2]

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[1] See likewise Record Commission, p. 78, where forks are enumerated among the items of Edward the First's domestic utensils.

[2] Wardrobe-book of Edward I., fol. 456.

[3] Ibid.

The autumn of the year 1290 brought threatening clouds to the prosperity of the island kingdoms, and to the royal family of queen Eleanora. The little queen, Margaret of Scotland, was to be sent this year from Norway to Scotland, and thence, by agreement, to the court of England, that she might be educated under the care of the admirable queen of Edward I. The bishop of St. Andrew's wrote to king Edward, that a report was spread of the young queen's death[3] on her homeward voyage. Edward, who had already sent the bishop of Durham[4] and six regents to take possession of Scotland, in the names of Edward of Caernarvon and Margaret of Norway,[5] was startled into prompt action at these alarming tidings. He took a hasty farewell of his beloved queen, and charged her to follow him with all convenient speed.

Edward had not entered Scotland when the fatal news reached him that Eleanora, the faithful companion of his life, in travelling through Lincolnshire to join him previously to his entering Scotland, had been seized with an autumnal fever at Herdeby, near Grantham. It seems, by existing documents,[1] that the queen's illness was lingering, but did not take a fatal character until a few days before the king was summoned. Her wardrobe-book notes the payment of one mark to Henry of Montpelier, for syrup and other medicines bought at Lincoln, October 28, for the queen at Herdeby. Master Leopardo, Eleanora's household physician, was likewise in attendance on her, besides a leech in the service of the king of Arragon. The queen rewarded them in her will: to Leopardo she gave twenty marks, and to the Arragonese leech twelve and a-half; for she left an elaborate will, which seems to have contained legacies to the various persons who attended on her in her last sickness. Her two damsels, Joanna and Isabella de Camville,[2] were munificently dowered by her. Many payments of five, ten, or twenty marks are paid them towards their marriages, and sometimes for care concerning the queen's soul; from all which it may be fairly concluded they were the queen's attendants in her illness. Their mother likewise received twenty pounds, as arrears of a salary from Easter to Michaelmas.[3] Her humbler servants were not forgotten: she left a legacy to William her tailor, and to the cook of her daughter the princess Eleanora, for services performed.

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[1] MS. in the Tower, quoted by B. Botfield, esq., in his learned work, Manners and Household Expenses of England, xlviii.

[2] Ibid.

[3] She died at the Orkneys, it is supposed of the fatigue of a very stormy voyage, being driven to those islands by violent weather, October 1290.–See Walsingham. Her death was the greatest national calamity that ever befell Scotland. An elegant female poet, Miss Holford, says,—

"The north wind sobs where Margaret sleeps,
And still in tears of blood her memory Scotland steeps."

[4] From the Latin of Wikes.

[5] Act. Pub., and Buchanan.

Ambition, at the strong call of conjugal love, for once released its grasp on the mighty heart of Edward. In comparison with Eleanora, dead or dying, the coveted crown of Scotland was nothing in his estimation. He turned southward instantly when the fatal news of her danger reached him; but though he travelled with the utmost speed, he arrived too late to see her living once more. His admirable queen had expired, November 29th, at the house of a gentleman named Weston. She died, according to our calculation, in the forty-seventh year of her age.

The whole affairs of Scotland, however pressing they might be, were obliterated for a time from the mind of the great Edward, by the acute sorrow he suffered for the death of Eleanora;[1] nor, till he had paid the duties he considered due to her breathless clay, would he attend to the slightest temporal business. In the bitterest grief he followed her corpse in person, during thirteen days, in the progress of the royal funeral from Grantham to Westminster. At the end of every stage the royal bier rested, surrounded by its attendants, in some central part of a great town, till the neighbouring ecclesiastics came to meet it in solemn procession, and to place it before the high altar of the principal church. At every one of these resting-places the royal mourner vowed to erect a cross in memory of the *chère reine,* as he passionately called his lost Eleanora. Thirteen of these splendid monuments of his affection once existed: that of Northampton[2] still remains, a model of architectural beauty. The ceremony of making the sites for these crosses is thus described by the chronicler of Dunstable: "Her body passed through Dunstable and rested one night, and two precious cloths were given us, and eighty pounds of wax. And when the body of the queen was departing from Dunstable, her bier rested in the centre of the market-place, till the king's chancellor and the great men then and there present had marked a fitting place where they might afterwards erect, at the royal expense, a cross of wonderful size,—our prior being there present, and sprinkling holy water."

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[1] Wardrobe-book of Edward I., fol. 18, b. 47.

[2] Daughters of sir Robert de Camville. Manners and Household Expenses of England, by B. Botfield, esq.; Executores Dominæ Alianore, Consortis Edwardi Primi.

[3] Ibid. 103.

The principal citizens of London, with their magistrates, came several miles on the north road, clad in black hoods and mourning cloaks, to meet the royal corpse and join the solemn procession. The hearse rested, previously to its admission into Westminster-abbey, at the spot now occupied by the statue of Charles I., which commanded a grand view of the abbey, the hall, and palace of Westminster. The king, in his letter to the abbot of Cluny, desires prayers for the soul of her "whom living he loved, and whom dead he shall never cease to love." Yet, as the great expenses of crosses erected, her funeral,[3] and her beautiful tomb and statue, were paid by her executors, there is some reason to suppose her own funds discharged the costs. It is needful to explain the use of these crosses: they were places of the field or out-door preaching of the ancient church; likewise, sustenance for the poor was distributed from them, according to the means of their several endowments.

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[1] Walsingham and Speed.

[2] Waltham-cross was built where Eleanora's corpse turned from the high north road, to rest for the night at Waltham-abbey.

[3] Fœdera, vol. i. p. 743.

They buried queen Eleanora at the feet of her father-in-law, December 10, 1290. Her heart was enclosed in an urn, and deposited in the church of the Black Friars, London: round it a rich picture was painted or enamelled. Her elegant statue, reclining on an altar-shaped tomb, was cast in bronze by an artist patronised by Henry III. and Edward I. He was supposed to be the celebrated Pietro Cavallini, but his name is now certified[1] as master William Torell, a native statuary. He built his furnace to cast the queen's statue in St. Margaret's churchyard. The nine beautiful crosses were erected by artists who were of English descent.[2] As to Torell, he certainly produced a work of which any modern artist might be justly proud. We feel, while gazing upon it, that it possesses all the reality of individual resemblance. The countenance of Eleanora is serenely smiling; the delicate features are perfect, both in form and expression. The right hand held a sceptre, now broken away; the left is closed over something pendent from the neck by a string, supposed to be a crucifix, likewise destroyed. Her head is crowned with a magnificent circlet, from which her hair falls in elegant waves on her shoulders. The queen of Edward I. must have been a model of feminine beauty. No wonder that the united influence of loveliness, virtue, and sweet temper should have inspired in the heart of her renowned lord an attachment so deep and true.

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[1] See the accounts of queen Eleanora's executors, edited by B. Botfield, esq., from which the author is glad to correct the error into which Walpole had led her. Mr. Botfield has gathered, that the munificent Edward paid his artist for this statue, and that of his father Henry III., more than 1700*l*. of our money: likewise for a rich cover to enclose his queen's statue, which was richly gilt; gold florins were purchased for the gilding, and it was only exhibited on solemn days.

[2] See payments to Alexander, the designer.—Botfield's Executors' Accounts of the Queen's Expenses, lxxxiv. William of Suffolk cast the smaller images at Blackfriars; Richard of Stowe built Lincoln-cross; John of Battle, Northampton, Stratford, Dunstable, and St. Alban's; Waltham, Roger de Crundell; Charing, Richard de Crundell; Cheapside, Michael of Canterbury.

The king endowed the abbey of Westminster with many rich gifts, for dirges and masses to commemorate his beloved queen. Wax-lights perpetually burnt around her tomb, till the Reformation extinguished them three hundred years afterwards, and took away the funds that kept them alight. "She hath," says Fabyan, "two wax tapers burning upon her tomb both day and night, which hath so continued syn the day of her burying to this present."[1] The tomb itself is of grey Petworth marble, and is designed in a style corresponding with the original memorial-cross of Waltham, especially the lower range of shields, on which are seen embossed the towers of Castile and the purple lions of Leon, with the bendlets of Ponthieu. Various paintings by Walter de Durham once adorned the canopy and the base, of which some faint traces alone remain. Round the metal table on which the statue reposes is a verge, embossed with Saxon characters, to this effect:—"Here lies Alianor, wife to king Edward, formerly queen of England, on whose soul God for pity have grace! Amen." This is at present the sole epitaph of Eleanora of Castile; but before the Reformation the hearse-tablet hung near the tomb, on which were some funeral verses in Latin, with an English translation by some ancient rhymester,[2] transcribed here, not for their beauty, but their historical character:—

"Queen Eleanora is here interred, a royal virtuous dame,
Sister unto the Spanish king, of ancient blood and fame;
King Edward's wife, first of that name, and prince of Wales by right,
Whose father Henry, just the third, was sure an English wight.
He craved her wife unto his son; the prince himself did goe
On that embassage luckily, himself with many moe.

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[1] The tomb of Henry III. is richly inlaid with curious and precious stones, which his son Edward I. brought with him from Syria for that purpose. Its splendour may be noticed by those who walk in the abbey beneath St. Edward's chapel. Fortunately most of this beautiful mosaic of curious stones is perfect on the outside of the chapel, which is placed at an inconvenient height for the operations of the pickers and stealers who daily visit that stately fane; therefore this memento of our great king's filial piety still remains in a tolerable state of preservation. "Edward I. reserved some of his precious store to adorn the statue of his beloved wife, for round the neck are cusps, where a carcanet has been fixed, but it has been wrenched off and stolen."—Pennant.

[2] A tradition is extant, that Skelton (poet-laureate to Henry VIII.) translated the Latin epitaphs into English, while he was a sanctuary-man under the protection of abbot Islip, who had the translations hung on tablets near the tombs. —Brayley's Historical Perambulator.

This knot of linked marriage the king Alphonso liked,
And with his sister and this prince the marriage up was striked.
The dowry rich and royal was, for such a prince most meet,
For Ponthieu was the marriage gift, a dowry rich and great;
A woman both in counsel wise, religious, fruitful, meek,
Who did increase her husband's friends, and 'larged his honour eke.
LEARN TO DIE!"

Of all the crosses raised to the memory of Eleanora of Castile by her sorrowing widower, that of Charing is the most frequently named by the inhabitants of the metropolis, although the structure itself has vanished from the face of the earth. Yet every time Charing-cross is mentioned, a tribute is paid unconsciously to the virtues of Edward the First's beloved queen, for the appellation is derived from the king's own lips, who always spoke of her, in his French dialect, as the *chère reine.* Thus the words 'Charing-cross' signify the 'dear queen's cross,'[1] an object that was always seen by the royal widower in his egress and regress from his palace of Westminster. This anecdote is corroborated by Edward's personal habits, who certainly, like his ancestors, spoke French in his familiar intercourse.[2] Our sovereigns had not yet adopted English as their mother-tongue. Although Edward and his father spoke English readily, yet their conversation in domestic life was chiefly carried on in French. Foreigner as she was, Eleanora of Castile entirely won the love and good-will of her subjects. Walsingham thus sums up her character: "To our nation she was a loving mother, the column and pillar of the whole realm; therefore, to her glory, the king her husband caused all those famous trophies to be erected, wherever her noble corse did rest; for he loved her above all earthly creatures. She was a godly, modest, and merciful princess: the English nation in her time was not harassed by foreigners, nor the country people by the purveyors of the crown. The sorrow-stricken she consoled as became her dignity, and she made them friends that were at discord."[1]

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[1] Malcolm's London. Wilkinson's Londinium Rediviva. In the accounts published by Botfield of Eleanora's executors, pp. 118, 123, Charing-cross is frequently mentioned, and its progress minutely traced: it is spelt variously, but at last settled as *Crucem de la Char-rynge.* Malcolm was a practical matter-of-fact antiquarian, not likely to give a romantic derivation; yet we own that the expression *la Char-rynge,* in the mixed language of the executors' Compotus, raises a supposition that the word 'Charing' simply meant to express the ring or carriage-drive where the cars went round, while their masters were attending the royal levees at Westminster-palace.

[2] Holinshed.

Civilization made rapid advances under the auspices of a court, so well regulated as that of Eleanora of Castile. Wales, in particular, emerged from its state of barbarism in some degree. The manners of the Welsh were so savage at the time when Eleanora kept her court in North Wales, that her royal lord was forced to revive an ancient Welsh law, threatening severe punishments on any one "who should strike the queen, or snatch any thing out of her hand." The English had little reason to pride themselves on their superiority. Although there was no danger of their beating the queen in her hall of state, they had pelted her predecessor from London-bridge. Moreover, in the commencement of the reign of Edward I., London was so ill governed, that murders were committed in the street at noon-day.[2]

Sculpture, architecture, and casting in brass and bronze, were not only encouraged by king Edward and his queen, but brought to great perfection by the English artists whom they patriotically employed. Carving in wood, an art purely English, now richly decorated both ecclesiastical and domestic structures. Eleanora of Castile first introduced the use of tapestry as hangings for walls: it was a fashion appertaining to Moorish luxury, and adopted by the Spaniards. The coldness of our climate must have made it indispensable to the fair daughter of the South, chilled with the damp stone-walls of English gothic halls and chambers. In the preceding centuries, tapestry was solely worked to decorate altars, or to be displayed as pictorial exhibitions, in solemn commemoration of great events, like the Bayeux tapestry of Matilda of Flanders. The robes worn by the court of Eleanora of Castile were graceful; the close under-gown, or kirtle, was made high in the neck, with tight sleeves and a train, over which an elegant robe with full fur sleeves was worn. The ugly gorget, an imitation of the helmets of the knights, executed in white cambric or lawn, out of which was cut a visor for the face to peep through, deformed the head-tire of some of the ladies of her court, and is to be seen on the effigy (otherwise most elegant) of Aveline countess of Lancaster, her sister-in-law. But Eleanora had a better taste in dress; no gorget hides her beautiful throat and fine shoulders, but her ringlets flow on each side of her face, and fall on her neck from under the regal diadem. The ladies of Spain are celebrated for the beauty of their hair, and we see by her statues that Eleanora did not conceal her tresses. The elegance and simplicity of the dress adopted by this lovely queen, might form a model for female costume in any era.[1]

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[1] The common people have not dealt so justly by her; the name of this virtuous woman and excellent queen is only known by them to be slandered by means of a popular ballad, called "A Warning against Pride; being the Fall of Queen Eleanora, wife to Edward I. of England, who for her pride sank into the earth at Queenhithe, and rose again at Charing-cross, after killing the Lady Mayoress." Some faint traces of the quarrels between the city of London and Eleanor of Provence regarding Queenhithe had been heard by the writer of this ballad, who confounded her with her daughter-in-law, whose name was connected with Charing-cross.

[2] The vigorous government of Edward soon crushed these evils. He made it penal by proclamation for any person but the great lords to be seen in London streets with either spear or buckler, after the parson of St. Martin's-le-Grand had rung out his curfew-bell,—a proof that the curfew was rung as late as the time of Edward I. It had become an instrument of civil police, rather than military despotism. The highways, on which we have seen Henry III. and his queen robbed in open day, were now cleared of all wood, excepting high trees, for forty feet on each side. The first clock in England was set up in a clock-tower, opposite to Westminster-palace.—Stowe.

There is little more than tradition to support the assertion, that to Eleanora of Castile England owes the introduction of the famous breed of sheep for which Cotswold has been so famous. A few of these animals were introduced, by the care of the patriotic queen, from her native Spain; and they had increased to that degree in about half a century, that their wool became the staple riches of England. It is said[2] (authority wanting) that Anthony Bec, bishop of Durham, having obtained possession of Eltham-palace, originally a royal demesne, after building superbly there, bequeathed it with its improvements to queen Eleanora.

The last time the name of Eleanora of Castile appears in our national records is in the parliamentary rolls, and from Norman French we translate the following supplication:—"The executors of Oliver de Ingram pray to recover before the king's auditors three hundred and fifty marks, owed by dame Alianore, late queen and companion to our lord king Edward I., and the said executors show, that though our lord the king had given command to have it paid, it is not yet done; therefore they humbly crave that he will be pleased to give a new order for that same, on account of the health of the soul of the said queen Alianore, his companion." By this document we learn, from the best authority, that creditors, in the times when Catholicism was predominant, considered they kept a detaining hold on the souls even of royal debtors. Moreover, in the same parliament the poor prioress and her nuns of St. Helen present a pathetic petition to the king, representing "how earnestly they have prayed for the soul of madame the queen, late companion to king Edward; and they hope for perpetual alms for the sustenance of their poor convent in London, in consideration of the pains they have taken."[1]

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[1] Pennant.

[2] Hist. of Eltham Palace.

Eleanora of Castile left seven living daughters and one son. Only four of her daughters were bestowed in marriage. The princess-royal was united, in 1292, to the duke of Barr: the nuptial festivities were royally celebrated at Bristol.[2] The king paid Husso de Thornville, valet of the count of Barr, for bringing him news of the birth of her eldest son, the enormous sum of fifty pounds! But this boy was the next heir to England after Edward of Caernarvon, as Edward I. settled the succession on the daughters of Eleanora of Castile; first on the countess of Barr and her progeny, then on Joanna of Acre, and all the seven princesses then alive, in succession.

Isabella,[3] the sixth daughter of king Edward and Eleanora of Castile, was married at Ipswich (the year before her father's wedlock with Marguerite of France) to the count of Holland. Some circumstance connected with the wedding of the princess Isabella had put the royal widower of Eleanora of Castile in a violent fit of anger, for he threw the bride's coronet behind the fire; a freak which would never have been known, if the keeper of his privy-purse[1] had not been obliged to account for the outlay of money "to make good a large ruby and an emerald lost out of the coronet, when the king's grace was pleased to throw it behind the fire." A strange stormy scene, lost in the dimness of time, is assuredly connected with this incident, which occurred at Ipswich, January 18, 1297. It is doubtful if the young bride ever left England: two years afterwards her lord died, and she was left a widow, childless. She afterwards married the earl of Hereford, Humphrey de Bohun. Another entry mentions the birth of her first child: "October 30, 1303. To Robert le Norreys, servant to the lady Isabella, countess of Hereford, the king's daughter, for bringing news to the prince [of Wales] of the birth of her first son, 26*l*. 13*s*. 4*d*."

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[1] Folio 1, Par. Rolls, 475.

[2] The summons for the knights of the adjacent counties to attend at Bristol the marriage-feast of this princess is extant in the records of Bristol, kindly communicated by T. Garrard, esq.

[3] The entries in the household-book of Edward I., 1298, preserve some of the particulars of this marriage: "To Maud *Makejoy*, for dancing before Edward prince of Wales in the king's hall at Ipswich, two shillings. To sir Peter Champrent, in lieu of the bridal bed of the countess of Holland, the king's daughter, which he ought to have had as his fee when she married the earl of Holland at Ipswich, twenty marks. To Reginald Page, to John the *vidulator*, and Fitz-Simon, minstrels, for making minstrelsy the day of the marriage of the king's daughter, the countess of Holland, fifty shillings each."

Edward I. survived most of his beloved Eleanora's children. Joanna of Acre died soon after her father. The countess of Barr preceded him to the tomb, not long after the birth of her second son in 1298, and the countess of Hereford survived him but four years. The nun-princess, and the unfortunate Edward II., were the only individuals that reached the term of middle life out of the numerous family that Edward I. had by Eleanora of Castile.

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[1] Wardrobe-book of Edward I., fol. 47.

MARGUERITE OF FRANCE,

SECOND QUEEN OF EDWARD I.

The family of Marguerite—Disconsolate widowerhood of Edward I.—Demands Marguerite's sister, Blanche la Belle—Edward contracted to Marguerite—Espousals—Maids of honour—Edward leaves his bride for the Scotch war—Queen follows Edward—Lives at Brotherton—Eldest son born there—Left at Cawood—Queen goes to Scotland—Danger of journey owing to Wallace—Her court at Dunfermline—High festival at Westminster-palace—Marguerite's gold circlet—Birth of the queen's second son—Queen's kindness—Robert Bruce's crown—Queen saves a goldsmith's life—Benevolence to the mayor of Winchester—Residence at Winchester—Death of king Edward—Happy wedlock of Marguerite—Her good qualities—Her historiographer John o' London—His sketch of Edward's character—Anecdotes of Edward—Lamentations of the royal widow—Marguerite's visit to France—Friendship with her son-in-law—Widowhood—Early death—Burial—Charities—Foundations—Debts—Children—Present descendants.

The early death of the brave son and successor of St. Louis, king Philip le Hardi, left his youngest daughter, the princess Marguerite, fatherless at a very tender age. She was brought up under the guardianship of her brother Philip le Bel, and carefully educated by her mother queen Marie, a learned and virtuous princess, to whom Joinville dedicated his immortal memoirs.[1] Marguerite early showed indications of the same piety and innate goodness of heart which, notwithstanding some superfluity of devotion, really distinguished the character of her grandfather.

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[1] Of the life of St. Louis.

Marguerite of [illegible]

London, Henry Colburn, 1851

If Marguerite of France possessed any comeliness of person, her claims to beauty were wholly overlooked by contemporaries, who surveyed with admiration the exquisite persons of her elder brother and sister, and surnamed them, by common consent, Philip le Bel and Blanche la Belle. The eldest princess of France was full six years older than Marguerite,[1] and was, withal, the reigning beauty of Europe when Edward I. was rendered the most disconsolate of widowers by the death of Eleanora of Castile. If an historian may be believed, who is so completely a contemporary that he ceased to write before the second Edward ceased to reign, Marguerite was substituted, in a marriage-treaty commenced by Edward for the beautiful Blanche, by a diplomatic manœuvre unequalled for craft since the days of Leah and Rachel.

It has been seen, that grief in the energetic mind of Edward I. assumed the character of intense activity; but after all was done that human ingenuity could contrive, or that the gorgeous ceremonials of the Romish church could devise, of funeral honours to the memory of the *chère reine,* his beloved Eleanora, the warlike king of England sank into a morbid state of melancholy. His contemporary chronicler emphatically says,—

> "His solace all was reft sith she was from him gone.
> On fell things he thought, and waxed heavy as lead,
> For sadness him o'ermastered since Eleanor was dead."[2]

A more forlorn widowerhood no pen can portray than is thus described by the monk Piers. Nevertheless, it is exceedingly curious to observe how anxious Edward was to ascertain the qualifications of the princess Blanche. His ambassadors were commanded to give a minute dsecription, not only of her face and manners, but of the turn of her waist, the form of her foot and of her hand; likewise *'sa façoun,'*—perhaps dress and demeanour. The result of this inquisition was, that Blanche was perfectly lovely, for, to use the words which describe her, a more beautiful creature could not be found. Moreover, sire Edward, at his mature age, became violently in love (from report) of the charms of Blanche la Belle. The royal pair began to correspond, and the damsel admonished him by letter that he must in all things submit to her brother, king Philip. In truth, the extreme wish of king Edward to be again united in wedlock with a fair and loving queen induced him to comply with conditions too hard even for a young bride to exact, who had a hand, a waist, and a foot perfect as those possessed by Blanche la Belle. Philip demanded that Gascony should be given up by Edward for ever, as a settlement on any posterity Edward might have by his beautiful sister. To this our king agreed; but when he surrendered the province, according to the feudal tenure,[1] to his *suzerain*, the treacherous Philip refused to give it up, or let him marry his beautiful sister; and just at this time the name of Marguerite, the youngest sister of Blanche, a child of little more than eleven years of age, is found in the marriage-treaty between England and France.

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[1] See Piers of Langtoft, corroborated by Speed's calculation of the age of Marguerite.

[2] Piers of Langtoft.

The consternation of the king's brother, Edmund of Lancaster, when he found the villanous part Philip le Bel meant to play in the detention of the duchy of Guienne, is very apparent. His letter to king Edward assumes the style of familiar correspondence, and proves at the same time that earl Edmund was with his consort at the French court, negotiating the royal wedlock. "After," says earl Edmund, "my lord and brother had surrendered, for the peace of Christendom, this territory of Gascony to the will of France, king Philip assured me, by word of mouth, that he would agree to the aforesaid terms; and he came into my chamber, where the queen *my* wife[2] was, with monsieur Hugh de Vere, and master John de

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[1] This ceremony, as narrated by Piers, is exceedingly like the surrender of a modern copyhold.

"Edward without reserve sal give Philip the king
The whole of Gascony, without disturbing.
After the *forty days holding that feofment,*
Philip without delays sal give back the tenement
To Edward and to Blanche, and the heirs that of them come.
To that ilk *scrite* Edward set his seal,
That the gift was perfect, and with witnesses leal."

[2] The dowager of Navarre, queen Blanche, mother to Jane, wife of the king of France, was married to Edmund of Lancaster.

Lacy, and he brought with him the duke of Burgundy, and there he promised, according to the faith of loyal kings, that, in reality, all things should be as we supposed. And on this faith we sent master John de Lacy to Gascony, in order to render up to the people of the king of France the *seisin* of the land, as afore agreed. And the king sent the constable of France to receive it. And when these things were done, we came to the two queens,[1] and they prayed the king of France that he would forthwith give safe-conduct to my lord the king, to come and receive again his land and fortresses according to his covenant. And the king of France, in secret, in the presence of queen Jane, told me he was grieved that he must return a hard answer before the council, but, nevertheless, he meant to fulfil all he had undertaken. And forthwith he declared before his said council, 'that he never meant to restore the territory of which he had just been given full seisin.'"

Earl Edmund evidently concludes his letter in a great fright, lest Philip le Bel should persist in his cheating line of conduct; but he makes a serious exhortation to his brother not to let *small* causes break the compact. His letter is accompanied by a treaty of marriage, in which is inserted, not the name of the beautiful princess Blanche, but that of the child Marguerite. A fierce war immediately ensued, lasting from 1294 to 1298, during which time Edward, who at sixty had no time to lose, was left half married to Blanche; for, according to Piers of Langtoft, who seems intimately acquainted with this curious piece of secret history, the pope's dispensation had already been granted.[2]

It was not till the year 1298 that any pacific arrangement took place between Edward and the brother of Blanche. The treaty was then renewed for Marguerite, who had grown up in the mean time. The whole arrangement was referred to the arbitration of the pope, who decreed "that Guienne was to be restored to the right owner; that Edward I. should marry Marguerite; and that she should be paid the portion of fifteen thousand pounds left her by king Philip le Hardi, her father." This sum the chronicler Piers verily believes Philip le Bel meant to appropriate to his own use. Piers does not say why the younger sister was substituted instead of Blanche,[1] but he seems to insinuate, in these lines, that she was the better character:—

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[1] Jeanne of Navarre, the queen of France, and her mother queen Blanche, dowager of Navarre, wife of Lancaster.

[2] The facts stated by Piers are most satisfactorily confirmed by Wikes. Likewise by the learned researches of sir Harris Nicolas; see a Latin poem preserved in the City archives.—Chronicle of London, p. 132.

> "Not dame Blanche the sweet,
> Of whom I now spake;
> But dame Marguerite,
> *Good withouten lack*."

"Now," says a Latin poem[2] descriptive of the Scottish war, "the king returns, that he may marry queen Marguerite, the flower of France. When love buds between great princes, it drives away bitter sobs from their subjects."

Marguerite was married to Edward, who met her at Canterbury, by Robert de Winchelsea, September the 8th, 1299. "On Tuesday, the day of Our Lady's nativity, in the twenty-seventh year of the king, arrived dame Meregrett, the daughter of king Philip, at Dover, and proceeded the following day to Canterbury; and the present Thursday after, came Edward king of England into the church of the Trinity of Canterbury, and espoused the aforesaid Meregrett, queen of England, of the age of xx years."[3] The Patent rolls[4] preserve the memory of the circumstance, that the young queen was endowed by her warlike bridegroom with her dower at the door of Canterbury cathedral. Such was in conformity with a very ancient custom, in compliance with which, royal brides of England demanded and received a formal investiture of lands and other endowments from their kings in the face of the whole congregation, assembled to witness the settlement[1] as well as the nuptial rite.

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[1] It was because the beautiful Blanche had the prospect of being empress. Blanche, daughter of Philip le Hardi, and sister to Philip le Bel, married Rodolphus duke of Austria, eldest son to the emperor Albert I. Her husband was afterwards king of Bohemia. This marriage was arranged between king Philip and Albert. The young lady, who had accompanied her brother, was betrothed at Toul, in Lorraine, in the spring of 1299.—Du Fresne's Notes to Memoirs of the Prince de Joinville.

[2] Song of the Scottish Wars. Political Songs of England, Camden Society, 178.

[3] This curious entry, connected with the arrival of lady Marguerite of France, appears in the old French appendix to the Chronicle of the Mayors and Corporation of London.—De Antiquis Legibus Liber; Camden Society, edited by Thomas Stapleton, esq., F.A.S.

[4] In the Tower of London. The Latin preface sets forth the fact of the settlement on Marguerite being made at the church-door. We shall see the same custom exactly followed at the wedlock of Katharine of Arragon and Arthur prince of Wales.

Among "the folk of good array," sent by Philip for the accommodation of the May, his sister,[2] we find by the wardrobe-book of Edward I. that there were three ladies of the bedchamber, and four noble demoiselles, or maids of honour, Among these attendants are two French, as Agnes de la Croise, to whom was paid ten marks; and Matilde de Val, one hundred shillings. Two ladies were sent from England to wait on the young queen; these were the lady Vaux and the lady Joanna Fountayne: each received 10*l.* Our chroniclers speak much of the goodness of Marguerite of France, and she seems to have deserved the respect and affection of her royal lord. At the time of her marriage with the king of England, her niece, the young daughter of king Philip, was solemnly betrothed to her son-in-law Edward.

The public entry of queen Marguerite into London did not take place until a month after her wedlock. "On Sunday before the day of St. Edward, (October 13,) came queen Marguerite from the Tower to Westminster: the earls of Savoy and Bretagne, the mayor of London and his aldermen, and a train of three hundred burgesses of the city, were in her suite. Two conduits were in Cheap, which jetted wine; while cloths of gold, hung from all the windows, greeted her first view."[3]

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[1] There is a trace of this good custom in the marriage-service in our liturgy, where the church kindly makes the bridegroom endow his bride with all his worldly goods, ay, and long after the Reformation, give her a handful of silver and gold as earnest,—a promise which the practical working of secular law virtually reverses.

[2] "Philip for that May
Made providence ready;
With folk of good array
To Dover came she."

In the king's household-book there is a present of two hundred marks to the valet of the king's chamber, Edmund de Cornwall, on occasion of the king's marriage with Marguerite of France.

[3] De Antiquis Legibus Liber; Camden Society.

The stormy aspect of the times did not afford the royal bridegroom leisure to attend to the coronation of Marguerite. King Edward had very little time to devote to his bride; for, to his great indignation, all his barons, taking the opportunity of his absence, thought proper to disband themselves and disperse their feudatory militia, leaving their warlike king but the shadow of an army to pursue the advantages he had gained by the sanguinary battle of Falkirk. In less than a week the royal bridegroom departed with fiery speed to crush, if possible, the noble efforts the Scotch were making for their freedom. He left London the Wednesday after his marriage. The queen, while her husband was thus engaged, remained in London, and resided chiefly at the Tower. The suite of apartments where the queens of England had previously kept their state at Westminster having been lately destroyed by fire, the royal palace of the Tower was, in fact, the only metropolitan residence at which Marguerite could sojourn. Before her abode was settled at the Tower, king Edward took the precaution of issuing his royal mandate to the civic authorities, in which, after informing them,[1] "that his beloved companion the queen would shortly sojourn in the Tower of London, he enjoins that no petitioner from the city should presume to approach that spot, lest the person of the queen be endangered by the contagion being brought from the infected air of the city." During the summer succeeding the queen's bridal, her court at the Tower was placed almost under quarantine, owing to the breaking out of a pestilence, remarkable for its infectious nature. From the writings of Gaddesden, court physician at this time, we come to the conclusion that this was the smallpox, imported by Edward the First's crusade, from Syria.

After this summer, queen Marguerite spent the principal part of her time, like her predecessor, Eleanora of Castile, following the camp of king Edward; and when the ferocious contest he was carrying on in Scotland made her residence in that kingdom too dangerous, she kept court in one of the northern counties. Edward set out with his queen and his eldest son in April 1300, and taking his route through Lincolnshire, crossed the Humber into Yorkshire, and left the queen at Brotherton, a village on the banks of the Wherfe, in Yorkshire. Here that prince was born from whom the noble family of Howard is directly descended, and in whose right the head of that house bears the honour of "earl marshal of England." Marguerite gave birth to prince Thomas on the 1st of June. The queen had made rich offerings to the shrine of Canterbury previously to the birth of her infant, and she named him Thomas, after the favourite English saint.[1]

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[1] Order dated from Carlisle, June 28th.

> "The king bid her not stay, but come to the north countrie,
> Unto Brotherton on Wherfe: there was she
> Mother of a son, that child hight Thomas.
>
> When the king heard say she had so well *farn*, [fared]
> Thither he went away to see her and her bairn.
>
> The queen, with her son, at Cawood leaves he,
> And oft he came on Ouse her to y-see."[2]

The young queen was stationed at Cawood-castle, a magnificent pile of feudal grandeur, being a country-seat belonging to the archbishopric, seven miles from York. King Edward often came there down the Ouse to see her and her infant. She was resident at Woodstock in the summer of the succeeding year, for she gave birth to her second son, Edmund, August 5th, 1301. Marguerite returned, however, to Cawood, and made it her principal abode[3] till the year 1304. Her husband then considered Scotland subdued from sea to sea, and as completely prostrate as the principality of Wales; upon which he sent for his young queen to behold his triumph, and to keep Christmas at Dunfermline.[4] Piers of Langtoft declares there was much danger in her journey; for though Scotland was apparently subdued, the woods and highways swarmed with armed men, who would not come in and submit to the conqueror. Thus irreverently does that time-serving historian sing of a hero, whose memory has been embalmed by the justice of more modern ages. Speaking of the danger of the royal Marguerite's journey to Dunfermline, he says,—

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[1] Year-book of Edward I.

[2] Piers of Langtoft.

[3] Stowe's Annals, p. 208.

[4] For seven years, at this juncture, the courts of King's-bench and the Exchequer were held at York, to be near the royal court.—Walsingham.

"By that the war was ent [ended], winter was three
To Dunfermeline he went, for rest will he there.
For the queen he sent, and she did dight her cheer;
From Cawood she went to Dunfermeline to fare.
But the lord of Badenoch, Fraser, and Wallace
Lived at thieves' law, and robbed all the ways.
They had no sustenance the war to maintain,
But lived upon chance, and robbed aye between."

Scotland, at the time when queen Marguerite kept her court, the Christmas of 1304, at High Dunfermline,[1] seemed to lie bleeding at the feet of Edward; every fortress had surrendered, excepting Stirling-castle, from whose unconquered heights the royal lion of Scotland still floated in the national banner. Marguerite and Edward kept their royal state at Dunfermline until the last fatal wound was supposed to be inflicted on Scotland, by the treacherous capture of Wallace and the fall of Stirling. Leaving lord Segrave commander at Dunfermline, Edward and his queen commenced their celebrated triumphal progress homeward to England. Whether Edward brought Wallace in chains with him in this triumphal progress[2] cannot be precisely determined, but his cruel execution was the commencement of the high festivities held by Edward and his young queen at Westminster, to celebrate the conquest of unhappy Scotland.[3]

While the atrocious execution of Wallace was perpetrated, queen Marguerite and her court were making preparations for the grandest tournament ever celebrated in England since, as the chroniclers declare, the days of king Arthur's round table. On New-year's day, 1306, this tournament was held at Westminster-palace, where prince Edward received knighthood, and was invested with the principality of Wales; two hundred young nobles were knighted, and two of the king's grand-daughters married or betrothed. The festival of St. John the Baptist, the same year, was likewise kept with grand ceremonial. Among the parliamentary rolls we meet the following memoranda of this event:—"Thomas de Frowick, goldsmith of London, prays king Edward for the payment of 22*l.* 10*s.* for a circlet of gold made for Marguerite queen of England, to wear on the feast of St. John the Baptist." This goldsmith had previously made a rich crown for the queen, and by the orders of the king left his bill with John de Cheam and his fellows, who had neglected it; and being injured by the delay, he prays the king, in 1306, "for God's sake, and the soul of his father king Henry, to order payment." He is answered, "that he may take his bill to the king's exchequer, adding to it the charge for certain cups and vases which he had likewise made, and the clerk of the exchequer should pay him 440*l.* in part of his bill." Thus we find that queen Marguerite was provided with a splendid state crown though she was never crowned,—a ceremony prevented by the poverty of the finances. Marguerite is the first queen since the Conquest who was not solemnly crowned and anointed.

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[1] Among the scanty notices of the residence of the queen's court at Dunfermline, there is in the household-book of Edward I. a payment of forty shillings to John, the young son of John the bailiff, as boy-bishop in the chapel of Dunfermline; and forty shillings to Nicholas, the valet of the earl of Ulster, for bringing the news of the defeat of sir Simon Fraser and William Wallace at Koppesowe, by Latimer, Segrave, and Clifford.

[2] A tradition of Carlisle exists, which points out the arch of the castle-gateway as the spot where Wallace passed a night manacled in his cart, during his bitter progress through England. This circumstance favours the supposition that he was brought in the royal train, and that room could not be found in the castle to lodge the forlorn prisoner.

[3] We here subjoin the commencement of a song of malignant triumph, sung by the English, to commemorate the savage and unjust murder of this hero. We only disencumber the lines of their uncouth spelling. It is a specimen of English verse in the year 1305.—From the Harleian MSS., fol. 61. Brit. Museum.

"With fetters and with gyves
Wallace was y drawn
From the Tower of London,
That many might know;
In a kirtle of borrel, [coarse cloth]
Selcouth wise
Through Chepe,
And a garland on his head of the newest guise.

Queen Marguerite's beautiful sister, Blanche duchess of Austria, died towards the close of 1305. Early in the succeeding year, prayers for her soul were commanded by king Edward to be solemnly observed by the archbishop of Canterbury, because "she was the dear sister of his beloved consort queen Marguerite." The king certainly bore no malice for the perfidy of his former love, doubtless being convinced that he had changed for the better.

From the royal household-books may be gleaned a few particulars of the English court arrangements at this time. The king's state ship was called, in compliment to the queen, 'the Margaret of Westminster;' it does not seem a ship of war, but a sort of royal yacht, in which the king made his voyages when he went to the continent. The queen allowed her chief minstrel, who was called 'Guy of the Psaltery,' a stipend of 28*s*.; he received *bouche* of court, (or board at court,) and had the use of three horses when the queen was in progress. Guy of the Psaltery often received gratuities from king Edward, who was, as well as his young queen,[1] a lover of music and the fine arts, and frequently encouraged their professors, as may be seen by these articles of his expenditure: "To Melioro, the harper of sir John Mautravers, for playing on the harp while the king was bled, 20*s*.: likewise to Walter Luvel, the harper of Chichester, whom the king found playing on his harp before the tomb of St. Richard, at Chichester cathedral, 6*s*. 8*d*.: to John, the organist of the earl of Warrenne, for playing before the king, 20*s*."[2]

The queen gave birth at Woodstock, in the thirtieth year of her husband's reign, to her second son, prince Edmund, who was afterwards the unfortunate earl of Kent. The nun-princess Mary, daughter of Edward I., came from her cloister to bear her step-mother company after she had taken her chamber. The queen, on her recovery, went on a pilgrimage of thanksgiving with the nun-princess.

About this time "twenty-six pieces of dimity were given out from the king's wardrobe-stores to make queen Marguerite a feather bed,[1] and cushions for her charrette." Instead of finding the national rolls and records burdened with notices of oppressive exactions made by the queen-consort, as in the case of Eleanor of Provence, it is pleasant to observe that Marguerite's charitable kindness pervades these memorials, seen by few, and by still fewer appreciated. In the Exchequer rolls exist many precepts from the queen, ordering that debtors for fines due to her may be pardoned their debts, and more than one petition "that debtors of her dear lord the king may have time extended, or be excused."[2] One of these royal supplications is curious, and proves that the queen and her two little sons, Thomas and Edmund, prevailed on king Edward to pardon their dear friend the lady Margaret Howard[3] a debt owed by that lady to the crown. As prince Thomas, the eldest son of queen Marguerite, was only six years old, and the infant Edmund much younger, it may be judged who prompted the young petitioners, and how the queen must have made the caresses of her infants work on the heart of their great father. "To the honourable father in God, Walter bishop of Chester, treasurer to our lord, king, and father, Edmund, son of the king, salutes in great love. As our dear lady, madame the queen, has required, we would that you would grant to our good friend *ma dame* Marguerite, late wife of monsieur Robert Hereward, the remission of her debt. Written at Northampton, June 15."[4] Prince Thomas and the queen each wrote letters to the same effect, that their good friend may be spared her payment to the exchequer.

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[1] Household-book of Edw. I., pp. 7–95.

[2] Very different is another entry in the expenses of the music-loving hero "To seven women meeting the king on the road between Gask and Uggeshall, and singing before him as they had been accustomed to do in the time of king Alexander, 3*s*." Small in proportion is the benefaction bestowed by the conquering Edward on those Scotch songstresses, who might have sung maledictions on him in their dialect for aught he knew to the contrary. While music and sculpture had attained some degree of perfection in England at this time, other arts and sciences were in a strange state of barbarous ignorance. The earliest notice of medical practice is to be found, at this era, in the Latin work of Gaddesden, physician at the court of queen Marguerite. This learned doctor, describing his treatment of prince Edward in the small-pox, thus declares his mode of practice: "I ordered the prince to be enveloped in scarlet cloth, and that his bed and all the furniture of his chamber should be of a bright red colour; which practice not only cured him, but prevented his being marked." More by good luck than good management; assuredly, it may be supposed that Gaddesden wished to stare the red inflammation of the small-pox out of countenance by his glare of scarlet reflections! He adds, in his Rosa Anglorum, that "he treated the sons of the noblest houses in England with the red system, and made good cures of all." In this childish state was the noble art of healing at the court of Marguerite

Marguerite of France is not the first instance of a queen-consort of England who ventured to stand between a Plantagenet king in his wrath and his intended victim. We learn, by the statement contained in an act of pardon by Edward I., that Godfery de Coigners "had committed the heavy transgression and malefaction of making the coronal of gold that crowned the king's rebel and enemy, Robert de Brus, in Scotland, and that he had secretly hidden and retained this coronal till a fitting occasion; but that these treasonable doings had since been discovered, and convicted by the king's council." No doubt, Godfery the goldsmith would have been dealt with according to the tender mercies shown to Wallace and Fraser, if he had not found a friend in queen Marguerite; "For," says Edward I., "we pardon him solely at the intercession of our dearest consort, Marguerite queen of England."[1] The citizens of Winchester were likewise deeply indebted to queen Marguerite, whose beneficent interference relieved them from the terrible consequences of king Edward's displeasure. To the mayor of Winchester had been confided the safe keeping of Bernard Pereres, a hostage of some importance, whom the city of Bayonne had delivered to the king as a pledge of their somewhat doubtful loyalty. Bernard made his escape. On which king Edward sternly commanded his sheriff of Hampshire to seize upon the city of Winchester, and to declare its liberties void,—thus reducing the free citizens to the state of feudal villeins. The mayor he loaded with an enormous fine of three hundred marks, and incarcerated him in the Marshalsea till it was paid. In despair, the Winchester citizens appealed to the charity of queen Marguerite. She recollected that, when she was first married, she had been received at Winchester with the most affectionate demonstrations of loyalty; moreover, she remembered that her husband had given her a charter, which entitled her to all the fines levied from the men of Winchester. Armed with this charter she went to her loving lord, and claimed the hapless mayor and his fine as her personal property. She then remitted half the fine, took easy security for the remainder, and set the mayor at liberty; nor did she cease pleading with her consort, till he had restored to Winchester the forfeited charters.[2]

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[1] Wardrobe-book, 34 Edward I. [2] Household-book of Edward I.

[3] The name is spelled 'Hereward' in the French; the order was sent by the queen to the barons of the Exchequer.—Madox's History of the Exchequer. The debt was some copyhold fine. [4] Folio ii. 1048.

Queen Marguerite retired to Winchester, where she was deservedly beloved, when she gave birth to a princess,—her third, but the king's sixteenth child. The infant was called Eleanora, after Edward's first queen and his eldest daughter, likewise deceased: she died in a few months. Marguerite certainly followed her royal lord on his last northern expedition, for the Lanercost chronicle expressly declares, "that the king came to Lanercost-monastery, October 1st, 1306, very sick and infirm, accompanied by his queen Marguerite; and that they staid there four days, when the royal pair paid a visit to Carlisle-castle for three days;[1] but the king's health being daily declining, they returned to Lanercost and spent the Christmas there, and dwelt with the monks till February 28th." There are some indications that the queen was with the royal warrior when he laid on his death-bed. He was advancing to invade Scotland with a powerful army, but before he reached the border he fell ill, at Burgh-on-Sands. He survived a few days, till the prince of Wales came up with the remaining forces time enough to receive his last commands, which breathed implacable fury against the Scots. The dying warrior, moreover, commanded his son "to be kind to his little brothers Thomas and Edmund, and, above all, to treat with respect and tenderness his mother, queen Marguerite." Edward expired July 7th, 1307; while he remained unburied, 100*l.* was paid by his treasurer, John de Tunford, for the expenses of the royal widow.[2]

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera.

[2] Milner's History of Winchester, from the Trussel MS.

The chroniclers of England record no fault or folly of queen Marguerite: nothing exists to contradict the assertion of Piers, that she was "good withouten lack," and a worthy successor to Eleanora of Castile. Like Adelicia of Louvaine, the queen of Henry I., Marguerite kept a chronicler to record the actions of her great lord. He was named 'John o' London,' (not a very distinctive appellation); but as we have given a personal sketch of Edward in his youth, we add a portrait of him in advanced life, drawn under the superintendence of his royal widow:—"His head spherical, (this is the second instance in which we have found that the chroniclers of the middle ages notice the form of the head); his eyes round, gentle and dove-like when pleased, but fierce as a lion's and sparkling with fire when he was disturbed; his hair crisp or curling, his nose prominent, and raised in the middle; his chest broad, his arms agile, his limbs long, his feet arched, his body firm and fleshy, but not fat. He was so strong and active, that he could leap into his saddle by merely putting his hand on it. Passionately fond of hunting, he was engaged with his dogs and falcons when not in war. He was seldom ill, and neither lost his teeth, nor was his sight dimmed with age. He was temperate; never wore his crown after the coronation, thinking it a burden; he went about in the plain garments of a citizen, excepting on days of festival."—"What could I do more in royal robes, father, than in this plain gabardine?" said Edward once to a bishop, who remonstrated with him on his attire as unkingly.[1]

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[1] Probably to meet his parliament, summoned to assemble at Carlisle that year. The king, in consideration of the great trouble given to the monks of Lanercost by this royal residence, presented them with some grants of land.

[2] Issue Rolls.

How so elegantly proportioned a man as Edward I. came to be surnamed Longshanks has been a question to all writers since the opening of the stone sarcophagus in Westminster-abbey, when the body of this great warrior and legislator was found of just and fine proportions, without any undue length of legs: his stature was six feet two inches, from skull to heel. It appears that the insulting epithet, 'Longshanks,' was a *sobriquet* given by an incensed enemy, and first took its rise from a satirical song sung by the Scots when Edward laid siege to Berwick, being his first step in his ambitious invasion of Scotland.[2] Edward is said to have been so incensed at this song, that when he had stormed Berwick he put every living soul to the sword, to the number of four thousand persons. In this siege he displayed the fine horsemanship for which he was noted.

"What did king Edward?
Peer he had none like;
Upon his steed Bayard,
First he won the dike."[3]

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[1] Camden's Remains.

[2] "They that were within the toune, defended it *orpedly* [manfully], and they set on fire king Edward's ships, and sang a scorn,—

"What meaneth king Edward, with his long-shanks,
To win Berwick and all our unthanks."

[3] Piers Langtoft.

Besides this steed 'Bayard,' another, called 'Grey Lyard,' is celebrated in the barons' wars as one on which he ever "charged forward;" likewise his horse 'Ferraunt,' "black as a raven, on whose back, though armed in proof, sire Edward could leap over any chain, however high."[1] No chevalier of his day was so renowned for noble horsemanship as this most accomplished monarch. Yet it is certain that all which finally remained from his ambitious war in Scotland, was the insulting *sobriquet* of Longshanks.

The original MS. of the queen's chronicler, John o' London, is a great curiosity. It is written in Latin on vellum, very finely and legibly penned, and ornamented with initial letters, illuminated with gold and colours: the centres of the most of these are unfinished, and the manuscript itself is a fragment. The description of Edward's person is accompanied by an odd representation of his face, in the midst of an initial letter. The features bear the same cast as the portraits of the king: there is the small haughty mouth, the severe penetrating eyes, and the long straight nose. The king is meant to be shown in glory, but the head is surrounded with three tiers of most suspicious-looking flames: however, such as it is, it doubtless satisfied the royal widow, to whom the work was dedicated. "The noble and generous matron, Margareta, by the grace of God queen of England, invites all men to hear these pages." The plan of the oration is to describe the doleful bewailings of all sorts and conditions of persons for the loss of the great Edward. Of course the lamentation of the royal widow holds a distinguished place in the *commemoratio*. It commences thus: "The lamentable commendation of Margareta, the queen. Hear, ye isles, and attend my people, for is any sorrow like unto my sorrow? Though my head wears a crown, joy is distant from me, and I listen no more to the sound of my cithera[2] and organs. I mourn incessantly, and am weary of my existence. Let all mankind hear the voice of my tribulation, for my desolation on our earth is complete." The queen's chronicler proceeds to paraphrase the lament for Saul and Jonathan; at length he remembers the royal Marguerite by adding, "At the foot of Edward's monument, with my little sons, I weep and call upon him. When Edward died all men died to me." These lamentations for a husband more than seventy, from a widow twenty-six, seem a little exaggerated; yet the after-life of the royal Marguerite proved their sincerity. Her native historians mention her with bitterness, because they say that her aged spouse prevailed on her to write in her familiar letters false intelligence to her brother the king of France, with whom he was at war. Marguerite's deceitful information caused Philip le Bel to lose some towns in Flanders,[1] to the great indignation of the French. Possibly the queen was herself intentionally misinformed by her husband.

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[1] Piers Langtoft. Meaning the chains used, in defensive warfare, to guard gates and drawbridges.

[2] Harp.

Although queen Marguerite appeared in public earlier than was usual for the etiquette of royal widowhood in the fourteenth century, it was in obedience to the dying commands of her royal lord, whose heart was set on a French alliance. Soon after her husband's death she went to Boulogne with her son-in-law, and assisted at his marriage with her niece Isabella. At the birth of Edward III., queen Marguerite was present: her name is recorded as one of the witnesses of that event. This was according to the ancient customs of England, her two sons being next in succession to Edward II. While she lived, her niece, queen Isabella, led a virtuous and respectable life. Marguerite did not survive to see the infamy of this near relative, or the domestic wretchedness of her step-son, with whom she had always lived on terms of affection and amity. Marguerite is the first queen of England who bore her arms with those of her husband in one scutcheon; her seal is affixed to the pardon of John de Dalyeng, which pardon she had procured of her son-in-law, in the ninth year of his reign.[2]

We trace the life of this beneficent queen-dowager by her acts of kindness and mercy. Queen Marguerite's principal residence was Marlborough-castle, on the borders of the forest of Savernake; it was there she died, at the early age of thirty-six, on the 14th of February, 1317. King Edward the Second's household-book has the following entry relative to this event: "Sent by the king's order, to be laid upon the body of the lady Marguerite, late queen of England, by the hands of John de Hausted at Marlborough, the 8th of March, two pieces of Lucca cloth." Also at the place of its final destination, the Grey Friars', various other pieces of Lucca cloth were to be laid on her body, at the expense of the king. She was buried at the Grey Friars' church, the magnificent structure which she had principally founded:[1] her body was buried before the high altar, wrapped in the conventual robe of the Franciscans. The splendid monument raised to the memory of this beneficent woman was destroyed through the avarice of sir Martin Bowes, lord mayor, in the reign of queen Elizabeth: when the Grey Friars' church was made parochial, he, to the indignation of the antiquary Stowe, sold queen Marguerite's tomb and nine others of royal personages together with a number of grave-stones, for 50*l* Her monumental effigy was lost owing to this barbarous destruction.

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[1] Montfaucon.

[2] The seal is of red wax, with the lions of England on the right side, and her own fleurs-de-lis on the left. They are emblazoned on a shield, and not on a lozenge.—See Sandford, p. 120.

The features of Marguerite are delineated with minute distinctness in the statuette which represents her on the tomb of her great-nephew, John of Eltham. The cast of countenance which may be observed in most of the descendants of St. Louis (Louis IX.) is particularly marked in his grand-daughter Marguerite: it does not form a beautiful face, although oftentimes one uniting energy and good expression. The nose is large, long, and straight, but instead of keeping the Grecian facial line, it slants forward and hangs over a short upper lip. The style of face is familiar to the public in the portraits of Francis I. and Louis XI., where it is exaggerated to ugliness. It is seen in the statue of Louis IX., in the crypt of St. Denis: the holy king of France is no beauty, but has the most sensible and goodnatured expression possible. His grand-daughter, the second queen of our great Edward I., is here represented as a royal widow, but not as a professed *religieuse;* she wears the gorget wimple and the French widow's veil over it, surmounted by a rich open crown of fleur-de-lis, placed on a circlet of gems; she has her royal mantle on her shoulders, and a loose robe beneath, belted round with a splendid band studded with jewels. Such was her appearance at the marriage of Edward II. with her niece Isabella, and on state festivals at their courts.

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[1] Stowe. She began the choir in 1306, and finished it in her widowhood. She left by will 100 marks to this church. This foundation is now Christ-Church, Newgate. Part of Marguerite's original building is the cloister of the school

Marguerite left her two sons joint-executors to her will. Edward II. empowered his dearest brothers, "Thomas earl of Norfolk, earl-marshal, and Edmund of Woodstock, co-executors by the testament of our mother of good memory, Marguerite, late queen of England, to execute the said testament; and to have all goods and chattels that belonged to the said queen, and all her corn on her manors, whether housed or growing green in the earth, from the 14th day of February last, when she died, 1318. They are to receive all debts due to the queen-dowager, and pay what she owes, according to her will."[1] The troubles of the reign of Edward II. prevented the debts of the widow of his father from being paid, as we find the following petition concerning them. In the eighth year of Edward III. there is a petition to parliament[2] from Thomas earl of Norfolk, marshal of England, and executor of the testament of queen Marguerite his mother, praying, "that the king will please to grant, of his good grace, that the debts of the deceased queen may be forthwith paid by his exchequer, according to the order of king Edward II., whom God assoil."

Queen Marguerite is the ancestress of all our English nobility bearing the great name of Howard: the honours of her son Thomas Plantagenet, earl-marshal, were carried into this family by his descendant, lady Margaret Mowbray, marrying sir Robert Howard. The Howards, through this queen, unite the blood of St. Louis with that of the mightiest of the Plantagenet monarchs. The heiress of her second son, Edmund earl of Kent, married first sir Thomas Holland, and then Edward the Black Prince: through her, this queen was ancestress of the nobility who bore the name of Holland, which family became extinct in the wars of the roses.

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[1] Parliamentary Rolls.

[2] Ibid.

[illegible]

London; Henry Colburn, 1851.

ISABELLA OF FRANCE,

SURNAMED THE FAIR,

QUEEN OF EDWARD II.

CHAPTER I.

Isabella's parentage—Both parents reigning sovereigns—Her portion—Affianced to the prince of Wales—Her great beauty—Her marriage—Nuptial festivities—Sails for England with Edward II.—Summons for ladies to wait on her at Dover—Her wardrobe—Her coronation—Peeresses first summoned thereto—Slights offered to Isabella—Queen's complaints—Revenues—Her popularity—Her jealousy of Gaveston—Civil war—Queen's charity—Mediates peace with barons—Birth of her eldest son—Presents to her servants—Queen goes to France with the king—Return—Obtains amnesty—Conjugal happiness—Birth of her second son—Queen's churching-robe—Birth of her eldest daughter—Gifts to queen's nurse and servants—King's grants to Isabella—Her residence at Brotherton—Roger Mortimer—Queen's pilgrimage to Canterbury—Insolence of lady Badlesmere—Indignation of the queen—She excites the civil war—Birth of princess Joanna in the Tower—Queen Isabella's first acquaintance with Mortimer—Her influence with the king—Mortimer's plots—His escape—Queen's jealousy of the Despencers—Deprived of her revenues—Her French servants dismissed—Complaints to her brother—Estrangement of the king—Isabella mediatrix with France.

Since the days of the fair and false Elfrida, of Saxon celebrity, no queen of England has left so dark a stain on the annals of female royalty as the consort of Edward II., Isabella of France. She was the eleventh queen of England from the Norman conquest, and with the exception of Judith, the consort of Ethelwulph, a princess of higher rank than had ever espoused a king of England. She was the offspring of a marriage between two sovereigns,—Philip le Bel, king of France, and

Jane queen of Navarre. Three of her brothers, Louis le Hutin, Philip le Long, and Charles le Bel, successively wore the royal diadem of France.

Isabella was only four years old when her fatal wedlock with Edward of Caernarvon was determined, the preliminaries for that alliance forming a clause in the treaty negotiated between her father and Edward I. for a marriage between that monarch and her aunt, Marguerite of France.[1] It was agreed at the same time that the king her father was to give Isabella a marriage-portion of eighteen thousand pounds, and that she was to succeed to the dower which Edward I. settled on his bride as queen of England. The pope's dispensation for matrimony to be contracted between Edward prince of Wales and Isabella of France was published in the year 1303. The ceremonial of their betrothal was then solemnized in Paris, according to the usual forms. The earls of Lincoln and Savoy, as the procurators of the royal suitor, asked the lady Isabella in marriage for the prince of Wales of her august parents, Philip king of France and Jane queen of Navarre, whose consent having been given, père Gill, archbishop of Narbonne, repeated to the little princess the words in which the prince of Wales desired to plight her his troth; whereupon she placed her hand in that of the archbishop, in token of her assent, on condition that all the articles of the treaty were duly performed.[2] Isabella, who was born in 1295, was then in her ninth year.

Edward I. was so desirous of this alliance, that among his death-bed injunctions to his heir he charged him, on his blessing, to complete his engagement with Isabella. This was, in truth, the only command of his dying sire to which Edward II. thought proper to render obedience. Such was his haste to comply with a mandate which happened to be in accordance with his own inclination, that before the obsequies of his deceased king and father were performed, he despatched the bishops of Durham and Norwich, with the earls of Lincoln and Pembroke, to the court of France, to appoint a day for the solemnization of his nuptials. His ambassadors' reports of the charms of his intended bride made so lively an impression on the mind of Edward II., that he is reproached by the chroniclers of his reign, with having lost the kingdom of Scotland through his impatience to secure his prize.[1] His recognition as king of that realm, depended on his remaining there till the important affairs which required his presence were settled; but treating every consideration of political expediency with lover-like contempt, he hasted to the fulfilment of his contract with the royal beauty. There was the less cause for such unseasonable promptitude, since the fair Isabella had scarcely completed her thirteenth year.

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. ii. p. 928.

[2] Ibid.

Great preparations were made at Westminster-palace for the reception of the young queen. The royal apartments, which had been burnt down in the preceding reign, and had been rebuilt, were completed and furnished; the gardens were new turfed and trelised, the fish-ponds were drawn and cleaned, and a sort of pier jutting into the Thames, called 'the queen's bridge,' was repaired. The royal ship called 'the Margaret of Westminster' was, with her boats and barges, entirely cleaned and beautified. Various butteries and wardrobes were constructed in the vessel, not only by the command, but according to the device of the king himself, for his expected queen's accommodation.[2] After appointing his recalled favourite, Piers Gaveston, guardian of the realm, Edward sailed, early on Monday morning, January 22, 1308, accompanied by his mother-in-law, queen Marguerite, to meet his bride. He landed at Boulogne, where Isabella had already arrived with her royal parents.

The next day, being the festival of the Conversion of St. Paul, the nuptials of Isabella and her royal bridegroom were celebrated, in the cathedral of Boulogne, with peculiar magnificence. Four sovereigns, and as many queens, graced the bridal with their presence. These were the king and queen of France, the parents of the bride; Marie, queen-dowager of France, her grandmother; Louis, king of Navarre, her brother,—to whom queen Jane, their mother, had resigned the kingdom she inherited; the king and queen of the Romans; the king of Sicily; and Marguerite, queen-dowager of England, Isabella's aunt. The archduke of Austria was also present, and the most numerous assembly of princes and nobility that had ever met together on such an occasion. The dowry of the bride was provided from the spoils of the hapless knights Templars, who had been recently tortured, plundered, and murdered by her father.[1] Like most ill-gotten gains, this money by no means prospered in the spending.

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[1] Annals of St. Augustin. Walsingham. Rapin.

[2] Brayley and Britton's History of the Palace of Westminster, pp. 114–117.

The beauty of the royal pair, whose nuptials were celebrated with this extraordinary splendour, excited universal admiration; for the bridegroom was the handsomest prince in Europe, and the precocious charms of the bride had already obtained for her the name of Isabella the Fair.[2] Who, of all the royal and gallant company, witnesses of these espousals, could have believed their fatal termination? or deemed that the epithet of 'she-wolf of France' could ever have been deserved by the bride? High feasts and tournaments were held for several days after the espousals, at which the nobility of four royal courts assisted. These festivities lasted nearly a fortnight. Edward and Isabella were married on the 25th of January, and on the 7th of February they embarked for England, and landed at Dover the same day. There is in the Fœdera a copy of the summonses that were sent to Alicia, the wife of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, the countess of Hereford, and other noble ladies, by the regent Piers Gaveston, in the king's name, appointing them to be at Dover on the Sunday after the Purification of the Virgin Mary, to receive the newly-wedded queen, and to attend her on her progress to Westminster.[3]

The king and queen remained at Dover two days, where Piers Gaveston came to receive them. The moment the king saw him, he flew to him, fell on his neck, and called him "brother,"[4]—conduct which greatly displeased the queen and her uncles. From Dover the royal party proceeded to Eltham, where they remained till the preparations were completed for the coronation. Two of Isabella's uncles, Charles count of Valois, and Louis de Clermont, count of Evreux, brothers of Philip le Bel,[1] the duke of Brabant, with the grand-chamberlain of France and many other nobles, came as guests to the coronation. This ceremonial was postponed till Quinquagesima-Sunday, February 25th, one month after the nuptials of the king and queen. The royal circular in the Fœdera, addressed by king Edward to his nobles, in which "he commands their attendance with their consorts at Westminster, to assist at the coronation solemnity of himself and his consort, Isabella queen of England," is the first royal summons in which the wives of the peers of England are included.[2]

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[1] De la Moor, p. 1: British Museum.

[2] Froissart.

[3] Rymer's Fœdera.

[4] Ibid.

The young queen's outfit was magnificent.[3] She brought with her to England two gold crowns, ornamented with gems, a number of gold and silver drinking-vessels, golden spoons, fifty silver porringers, twelve great silver dishes, and twelve smaller ones. Her dresses were made of gold and silver stuff, velvet, and shot taffety. She had six dresses of green cloth from Douay, six beautifully marbled, and six of rose scarlet, besides many costly furs. As for linen, she had 419 yards for the bath alone: she was likewise endowed with six dozen coifs,—probably nightcaps. She brought tapestry for her own chamber, figured in lozenges of gold, with the arms of France, England, and Brabant. The king of France, on the occasion of his daughter's nuptials, had likewise made his royal son-in-law a profusion of costly presents, such as jewels, rings, and other precious articles, all of which Edward immediately bestowed on his favourite, Piers Gaveston, whose passion for finery was insatiable.[4] Such conduct was peculiarly calculated to excite the displeasure of a young girl, and Isabella naturally resented this improper transfer of her father's munificent gifts, which she regarded as part of her dower, and as heir-looms to her descendants. The nobles took occasion of the anger manifested by the young queen against the haughty favourite, to signify to their sovereign, that unless Gaveston were banished from the court, they would not attend the approaching coronation. Edward, alarmed at an intimation which he knew amounted to a threat of withholding their oaths of allegiance, promised that every thing should be arranged to their satisfaction at the parliament that was to meet directly after his inauguration.

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera.

[2] Ibid. vol. iii. p. 59.

[3] MSS. de la Bibliothèque Roi, vol. xxxiv. The amount is stated by M. Raumer to be 28,179 livres; but the articles enumerated would have cost a great deal more, unless the livres meant pounds sterling.

[4] Matthew of Westminster.

At the coronation fresh discords were engendered. Thomas earl of Lancaster, the son of Edward's uncle Edmund Crouchback, bore 'curtana,' or the sword of mercy, and Henry of Lancaster, his brother, the royal rod surmounted with the dove. But the indignation of the nobles exceeded all bounds, when it was found that the king had assigned the envied office of bearing St. Edward's crown to his unpopular favourite, who, on this occasion, was dressed more magnificently than the sovereign himself. This gave such offence to one of the earls of the blood-royal,[1] that nothing but consideration for the feelings of the young queen restrained him from slaying him within the sacred walls of the abbey. The archbishop of Canterbury being absent from the realm at that period, the king and queen were consecrated and crowned by the bishop of Winchester.[2]

So great was the concourse of spectators at this coronation, that many serious accidents occurred, through the eager desire of the people to obtain a sight of the beautiful young queen; and a knight, sir John Bakewell, was trodden to death. Gaveston had taken upon himself the whole management of the coronation ceremonial; and either his arrangements were made with little judgment, or his directions were perversely disobeyed, for it was, from the beginning to the end, a scene of the most provoking confusion and disorder. It was three o'clock before the consecration of the king and queen was over; and when we consider the shortness of the winter days, we cannot wonder at the fact stated, that though there was abundance of provisions of every kind, there was not a morsel served up at the queen's table before dark.[1] The lateness of the dinner-hour appears to have excited the indignation of the hungry nobles more than any other of Gaveston's misdeeds that day. The banquet was, moreover, badly cooked, and when at last brought to table, ill-served, and few of the usual ceremonies were observed, for the want of the proper officers to oversee and direct. In short, all classes were dissatisfied and out of humour, especially the queen, on whom many slights were put, but whether out of accident or wilful neglect is not stated.[2] The French princes and nobles returned home, in a state of great exasperation at the affronts which they considered their princess had received; and Isabella herself sent a letter to the king her father, full of complaints of her lord and his all-powerful favourite, Gaveston.[3] This had the effect of inducing Philip le Bel to strengthen the party of the discontented barons against Gaveston with all his influence, and gave an excuse to the French party for commencing those intrigues, which terminated so fatally at last for Edward II.

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[1] Milles' Catalogue of Honour, and Treasury of True Nobility. Carte.

[2] The king's first offering was a pound of gold, fashioned in the likeness of a king holding a ring in his hand. His second was eight ounces of gold, in the form of a pilgrim putting forth his hand to take the ring, or rather, we should think, to give it; for this device represented the legend of Edward the Confessor receiving the ring from St. John the Evangelist in Waltham-forest, from whence Havering-Bower derived its name. This very ring is declared by tradition to be the coronation ring her present majesty received at her inauguration.

The English crown, owing to the wars in Scotland, was at that time in great pecuniary distress, which was imputed to king Edward's gifts to Gaveston, and it is certain that he was unable either to pay his coronation expenses, or to maintain his household. As for his young queen, she was wholly without money, which caused her great uneasiness and discontent. It is possible, that if Isabella had been of an age more suitable to that of her husband, and of a less haughty temper, her beauty and talents might have created a counter-influence to that of the Gascon favourite, productive of beneficial effects; but the king was in his three-and-twentieth year, and evidently considered a consort who was only entering her teens as entitled to a very trifling degree of attention, either as a queen or a wife. Isabella was, however, perfectly aware of the importance of her position in the English court; and even had she been as childish in mind as she was in age, she was too closely allied in blood to the great leaders of the disaffected peers of England,—Thomas earl of Lancaster, and his brother, Henry earl of Derby, to remain quiescently in the background. The mother of the above-named nobles, Blanche of Artois, the queen-dowager of Navarre, was Isabella's maternal grandmother;[1] consequently the sons of queen Blanche, by her second marriage with Edmund earl of Lancaster, were half-uncles to the young queen, and resolutely determined to act as her champions against Piers Gaveston, who was now allied to the royal family by his marriage with Margaret of Gloucester, the daughter of Edward's sister, Joanna of Acre.[2]

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[1] Carte.

[2] Walsingham.

[3] Ibid.

Gaveston was not only the Adonis of the English court, but remarkable for his knightly prowess, graceful manners, and sparkling wit. It was the latter qualification which rendered him peculiarly displeasing to the English nobles, whom he was accustomed to deride and mimic, for the amusement of his thoughtless sovereign; nor was the queen exempted, when he was disposed to display his sarcastic powers.[3] The sins of the tongue are those which more frequently provoke a deadly vengeance than any other offence, and Gaveston's greatest crime appears to have been the fatal propensity of saying unforgivable things in sport. Isabella's father secretly incited the English barons to a combination against Gaveston, which compelled the king to promise to send him beyond seas. This engagement Edward deceitfully performed, by making him viceroy of Ireland, which country he ruled with great ability. The queen's pecuniary distresses were then brought before the lords,[4] and as they found there was no money in the treasury to furnish her with an income befitting her station, the revenues of Ponthieu and Montrieul, the inheritance of the king's mother, were appropriated to her use. The king specified his wish, "that his dearest consort, Isabella queen of England, should be honourably and decently provided with all things necessary for her chamber; and all expenses for jewels, gifts, and every other requisite."[1]

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[1] Milles' Catalogue of Honour. Brookes. Speed, &c. &c.

[2] The barons were exasperated at this marriage, which made the favourite Edward's nephew; yet the earl of Gloucester, who was certainly the person whom it more nearly concerned, as he was the young lady's brother, appeared perfectly satisfied, and remained Gaveston's firm friend, and it is more than probable that the lady herself was quite agreeable to the union.

[3] Walsingham.

[4] Carte.

During the first year of Isabella's marriage with Edward II., her father, Philip le Bel of France, appears to have acquired some degree of ascendancy in the councils of the nation; for we observe several letters in Rymer's Fœdera from Edward to his father-in-law, in which he condescends to explain his conduct with regard to Gaveston to that monarch, and weakly solicits his mediation with his turbulent barons. The following year Gaveston took occasion to return to England, to attend a tournament at Wallingford.[2] The magnificence of his retinue, and the great number of foreigners by whom he was surrounded, served to increase the jealous displeasure of the barons. Gaveston, according to his old practice, retaliated their hostility with scornful raillery, and on this occasion bestowed provoking *sobriquets* on the leaders of the feud against him. The earl of Pembroke, who was dark, thin, and sallow-complexioned, he called 'Joseph the Jew;' the earl of Warwick, who foamed at the mouth when angry, 'the wild boar of Ardenne;' and the earl of Lancaster, from his affecting a picturesque style of dress, 'the stage player;'[3] and in like manner he characterized the rest of the party, either from their peculiarities or defects. These insults were not only treasured up against a fearful day of reckoning, but had the effect of stirring up such a storm in the court, as made the throne of his royal master totter under him. The queen, her uncle the earl of Lancaster, and all the baronage of England, made common cause against Gaveston; and Edward, not daring to oppose so potent a combination, sent his favourite to Guienne; but at parting lavished on him all the jewels of which he was possessed, even to the rings, brooches, buckles, and other trinkets, which the queen had at various times presented to him as tokens of regard.[4]

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[1] "Therefore he is pleased to assign the lands of Ponthieu, &c. for her use, to provide her with such things; and he directs Richard de Rokeslie, his seneschal of that province, to give the deputies of the queen peaceful possession of the demesnes."—Fœdera, vol. iii., May 14th, 1380.

[2] Walsingham. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

In the year 1312, to the great displeasure of the queen and her party, Edward recalled Gaveston, and made him his principal secretary of state,[1] placing all the affairs of the realm under his control. This unpopular minister was accused of leading the king into a reckless course of dissipation, very offensive and injurious to the queen. Isabella, not being of a temper to bear her wrongs in silence, angrily remonstrated with Gaveston; on which he so far forgot the respect due to her high rank, as to make a contemptuous reply; and when she passionately complained to the king of the affront she had received from his insolent favourite, Edward treated it as a matter of little importance. It appears evident that, at this period, Isabella was only considered by him as a petulant child.[2] Less perilous, however, would it have been to offer slights and provocations to a princess of more advanced age and mature judgment, for Isabella vented her indignant feelings by sending an eloquent detail of her wrongs to her father the king of France, to whom she wrote bitter complaints of her royal husband's coldness and neglect, describing herself "as the most wretched of wives, and accusing Gaveston of being the cause of all her troubles, by alienating king Edward's affection from her, and leading him into improper company."

King Edward's letters, at the same period, to the father of his queen, are written in the most slavish style of prostration,[3] and he constantly applies to him for counsel and assistance in his internal troubles, apparently unconscious that his "dearest lord and father," as he calls the treacherous Philip, was the secret agitator by whom his rebel peers were incited to disturb his dreams of pleasure.[4] It is remarkable, that Isabella's name is mentioned but once in Edward's letters to the king her father, and then merely to certify "that she is in good health, and will (God propitious) be fruitful."[5] It was not, however, till the fifth year of Isabella's marriage with Edward II. that any well-grounded hope existed of her bringing an heir to England; and the period at which this joyful prospect first became apparent, was amidst the horrors of civil war.

The earl of Lancaster, at the head of the malcontent barons, took up arms against the sovereign in the year 1312, in order to limit the regal authority, and to compel Edward to dismiss Piers Gaveston from his councils. Isabella accompanied her lord and his favourite to York, and shared their flight to Newcastle; where, not considering either Gaveston or himself safe from the victorious barons, who had entered York in triumph, Edward, in spite of all her tears and passionate entreaties to the contrary, abandoned her, and took shipping with Gaveston for Scarborough.[1] The forsaken queen, on the advance of the confederate barons, retired to Tynemouth. During her residence at Tynemouth-castle, Isabella employed her time in charity and alms-deeds: of this, most interesting evidence appears in the royal household-book for 1312:—"October 9.—To little Thomeline, the Scotch orphan boy, to whom the queen, being moved to charity by his miseries, gave food and raiment to the amount of six-and-sixpence." We find, by another entry, that Isabella's good work did not stop with feeding and clothing the poor destitute creature: "To the same orphan, on his being sent to London to dwell with Agnes, the wife of Jean, the queen's French organist; for his education, for necessaries bought him, and for curing his maladies, fifty-two shillings and eight-pence."

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[1] Walsingham. Rapin. [2] Walsingham. [3] Ibid.
[4] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iii. [5] Ibid.

While the queen remained disconsolate at Tynemouth, Lancaster, who had got possession of Newcastle, sent a deputation to his royal niece, "with assurances of her safety;" explaining, "that their sole object was to secure the person of the favourite." The king, meantime, having left Gaveston in the strong fortress of Scarborough,[2] proceeded to levy forces in the midland counties for his defence. The indignation of the men of the north of England had, however, been so greatly excited at his neglect and desertion of the queen, while in a situation which required more than ordinary sympathy and tenderness, that they rose *en masse* to storm her adversary in his retreat. Gaveston, being destitute of provisions or the means of standing a siege, surrendered to the confederate lords, on condition of being safely conducted to the king, and allowed free communication with him previously to his trial before the parliament. In violation of the articles of this treaty, which the earl of Lancaster and the rest of the confederate barons had solemnly sworn to observe, Gaveston was brought to a sham trial and beheaded at Blacklow-hill, near Warwick, on a spot which, in memory of the tragedy committed there, is called Gaveshead.

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[1] Guthrie.

[2] Guthrie. Gaveston was taken very ill at Newcastle; for there is an entry in the household-book of Edward II.,—"To master William de Bromtoft, a physician, for his attendance on sir Piers de Gaveston, during his illness at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, two pounds."

The barons enjoyed the extreme satisfaction of ransacking the baggage of the luckless favourite, where they found many of the crown jewels, some articles of gold and silver plate belonging to the king, and a great number of precious ornaments, which had been presented to the king by queen Isabella, his sisters, and other persons of high rank. There is a minute list of these valuables in Rymer's Fœdera, and the catalogue is indeed likely enough to have excited the indignation of the jealous peers, who, on the green hill-side, sat in relentless judgment on the man whom the king delighted to honour.[1] Notwithstanding her avowed hostility against Gaveston, there is no reason to suppose that Isabella was in the slightest degree implicated in his murder, though his misconduct to her was one of the principal grounds of accusation used by the earl of Lancaster against him.

When Edward received the tidings of the tragic fate of the companion of his childhood, he was transported with rage and grief, and declared his intention of inflicting a deadly vengeance on the perpetrators of the outrage. He sullenly withdrew from London to Canterbury, but finally joined the queen at Windsor, where she was awaiting the birth of their first child.[2] This auspicious event took place on the 13th day of November, at forty minutes past five in the morning, in the year 1312,[3] when Isabella, then in the eighteenth year of her age and the fifth of her marriage, brought into the world the long-desired heir of England, afterwards that most renowned of our monarchs, Edward III., surnamed of Windsor, from the place of his birth.

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[1] Among other frivolous charges that were brought against Gaveston by the associate barons, he was accused of being "the son of a witch," and of having obtained his influence over the mind of his sovereign by the practice of sorcery. His mother had been actually burnt for sorcery in Guienne.

[2] Walsingham.

[3] Rymer's Fœdera.

The gloom in which the king had been plunged ever since the death of Gaveston, yielded to feelings of paternal rapture at this joyful event, and he testified his satisfaction by bestowing on John Lounges, valet to the queen, and Isabel his wife, twenty pounds, and settled the same on them as an annual pension for life.[1] Scarcely less delighted were Isabella's uncle, the count of Evreux, and the French nobles who were then sojourning in England, at the birth of the royal infant, who was remarkable for his beauty and vigour. They entreated the king to name the young prince Louis, after the heir of France and the count of Evreux; but the idea was not agreeable to the national feelings of the English in general, and it was insisted by the nobles that he should receive the name of his royal father and his renowned grandfather, Edward. Four days after his birth he was baptized with great pomp in the old chapel of St. Edward, in the castle of Windsor.[2]

Isabella's influence, after this happy event, was very considerable with her royal husband, and at this period her conduct was all that was prudent, amiable, and feminine. It was through her mediation that a reconciliation was at length effected between king Edward and his barons,[3] and tranquillity restored to the perturbed realm. Before the amnesty was published, queen Isabella visited Aquitaine in company with her royal husband; from thence they went to Paris, where they remained at the court of Philip the Fair nearly two months, enjoying the feasts and pageants which the wealthy and magnificent court of France provided for their entertainment. Plays were represented on the occasion, being Mysteries and Moralities for amusement and admonition, entitled *The Glory of the Blessed, and the Torments of the Damned.* The king of France, on their return, conducted them to Pontoise. A fire broke out in the chamber of the royal guests one night, and both Edward and Isabella escaped with difficulty from the flames in their night dresses: all their property and clothes were destroyed in the conflagration.[1]

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[1] Pyne's Royal Palaces.

[2] The ceremony was performed by Arnold, cardinal priest, and the royal babe had no less than seven godfathers; namely, Richard bishop of Poictiers; John bishop of Bath and Wells; William bishop of Worcester; Louis count of Evreux, uncle to the queen; John duke of Bretagne and earl of Richmond; Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke; and Hugh Despencer; but there is not the name of one godmother recorded. A few days after his birth, his fond father granted to his dearly-prized heir, his new and blameless favourite, the county of Chester, to be held by him and his heirs for ever; also the county of Flint.—Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iii.

[3] Walsingham.

Through the earnest entreaties of the queen, the long-delayed pardon to the insurgent barons was published by king Edward, October 13th, 1313, without any exceptions; and the royal deed of grace expressly certifies, "that this pardon and remission is granted by the king, through the prayers of his dearest companion, Isabella queen of England."[2] The parliament met amicably, and the barons solemnly made their submission on their knees to the sovereign in Westminster-hall, before all the people.[3] Soon after, the earl of Warwick, the most active agent in the death of Gaveston, dying suddenly, it was industriously circulated by his friends that he had been taken off by poison. The barons mistrusted the king: the only link that kept them and their sovereign from a fresh rupture was the queen, who at that period conducted herself so prudently as to enjoy the confidence of all parties. The year 1314 commenced with a temporary separation between the royal pair, on account of the renewal of the Scottish wars. Stirling, so appropriately designated by the chroniclers of that stormy period *Striveling,* was besieged by king Robert the Bruce,[4] and the English garrison demanded succour of their laggard sovereign. Edward at last took the field in person, only to meet with a disgraceful overthrow at Bannockburn, which the national pride of his subjects never could forgive.

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[1] History of Paris, by Dulaure. [2] Rymer's Fœdera. [3] Walsingham.

[4] Robert Bruce showed no slight judgment of character, when he thus spoke of the contrast between the first Edward of England and the second Edward: "I am more afraid of the bones of the father dead, than of the living son; and, by all the saints! it was more difficult to get half a foot of land from the old king, than a whole kingdom from the son."—Matthew of Westminster.

During the absence of king Edward in this disastrous campaign, his queen was brought to bed of her second son, prince John, at Eltham-palace, an event that appears to have been very pleasing to her royal lord, for there is the following entry in his household-book: "To sir Eubulo de Montibus, for bringing the first news to the king of the happy delivery of queen Isabella of her son John of Eltham, 100*l.*"—"The queen sent her valet, Goodwin Hawtayne, with letters to the bishop of Norwich and the earl of Lancaster, requesting them to come to Eltham to stand sponsors for her son John; Hawtayne's travelling expenses were sixteen shillings. John de Fontenoy, clerk of the queen's chapel, received one piece of Turkey cloth, and one of cloth of gold, for arraying the font in which the lord John, son of the king, was baptized at Eltham, 30th August. To Stephen Taloise, the queen's tailor, was delivered five pieces of white velvet for the making thereof a certain robe against the churching of the queen, after the birth of her said son." Isabella, as soon as she was able to travel with safety, went to meet her royal consort in the north of England. The household-book of that year records a reward given by king Edward to the queen's messenger who brought the first tidings of her arrival at York, September 27. The queen sent costly presents to the new pope John, of copes embroidered with large pearls, bought of Katherine Lincoln, and a cope embroidered by Rosia de Burford. To the same pope queen Isabella sent a present, through don John de Jargemoc, her almoner, of an incense-boat, a ewer, and a gold buckle set with divers pearls and precious stones, value 300*l.* About this time Robert le Messager was tried by jury and convicted of speaking irreverent or indecent words against the king; but the queen interested herself to prevent his punishment, by inducing the archbishop of Canterbury to become his surety for future good behaviour.[1]

The birth of the princess Eleanora took place in 1318. The household-book notes the king's gift of 333*l.* "to the lady Isabella, queen of England, for her churching-feast, after the birth of the lady Eleanora." There are likewise notices of money thrown over the heads of various brides and bridegrooms, as they stood at the altar,—the royal pair were present at their marriages, at Havering-Bower, Woodstock, and Windsor,—and for money given by the orders of the king at the chapel doors. Several other entries afford amusing information, respecting the manners and customs of Edward the Second's court:—Vanne Ballard, for pieces of silk and gold tissue of fustian, and of flame-coloured silk, for the making cushions for the charrettes of the queen and her ladies. To Robert le Fermor, (the closer,) boot-maker, of Fleet-street, for six pairs of boots, with tassels of silk and drops of silver gilt, price of each pair five shillings, bought for the king's use. Griffin, the son of sir Griffin of Wales, was selected as one of the companions of the young prince Edward, afterwards Edward III., at Eltham, by order of the king.

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[1] Madox, Hist. Exchequer.

When the king and queen kept Twelfth-night, their presents were magnificent: to 'the king of the Bean,' in one instance, Edward gave a silver-gilt ewer, with stand and cover; and another year, a silver-gilt bowl to match, as New-year's gifts. To William Sal Blaster, valet of the count of Poictiers, for bringing to the king bunches of new grapes at Newborough, 28th of October, 10*s*. Queen Isabella's chaplain was entitled to have the queen's oblatory money, of the value of *seven-pence*, redeemed each day of the year, except on the Assumption of the Virgin, when the queen offered gold. To Dulcia Withstaff, mother of Robert the king's fool, coming to the king at Baldock, at Christmas, 10*s*. To William de Opere, valet of the king of France, for bringing the king a box of rose-coloured sugar at York, on the part of the said king, his gift, September 28th, 2*l*. 10*s*. To the lady Mary, the king's sister, a nun at Ambresbury, the price of fifteen pieces of tapestry, with divers coats of arms, bought of Richard Horsham, mercer of London, and given to the lady Mary on her departure from court home to Ambresbury, 26*l*. To sir Nicholas de Becke, sir Humphrey de Luttlebury, and sir Thomas de Latimer, for dragging the king out of bed on Easter morning, 20*l*.[1]

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[1] Madox.

Edward II., in 1316, bestowed a considerable benefaction on Theophania de St. Pierre, his queen's nurse: besides fifty pounds sterling money, he gives this person, whom he calls lady of Bringuencourt, lands in Ponthieu, where queen Isabella was dowered.[1] In the household-books of Thomas Lancaster, Stowe found that 92*l.* had been presented by that prince to his royal niece's nurses and French servants. Isabella obtained from the king her husband a grant of the escuage belonging to him for the army of Scotland due from the knights' fees, which the queen held by grant for the term of her life.

The disastrous Scotch campaign was followed by the most dreadful famine ever known in England, which lasted for nearly three years.[2] The king and queen kept their court at Westminster during the Whitsuntide festival of 1317; and on one occasion, as they were dining in public in the great banqueting-hall, a woman in a mask entered on horseback, and riding up to the royal table, delivered a letter to king Edward, who, imagining that it contained some pleasant conceit or elegant compliment, ordered it to be opened and read aloud for the amusement of his courtiers; but, to his great mortification, it was a cutting satire on his unkingly propensities, setting forth in no measured terms all the calamities which his misgovernment had brought upon England. The woman was immediately taken into custody, and confessed that she had been employed by a certain knight. The knight boldly acknowledged what he had done, and said, "That supposing the king would read the letter in private, he took that method of apprizing him of the complaints of his subjects."[3]

The following year Robert Bruce laid siege to Berwick.

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iii.

[2] King Edward endeavoured to lower the enormous price of provisions by various statutes, but without effect, as the public misery was not caused by monopoly, but by dearth, which was felt even in his own palace; for on St. Lawrence's-eve, 1314, it was with difficulty that bread could be procured for the sustentation of the royal family.—Walsingham. De la Moor.

[3] The unpopularity of the king at this period tempted an impostor of the name of John Deydras, a tanner's son, to pretend that he was the true son of Edward I., who had been changed by his former nurse for him who so unworthily filled the throne of that mighty sovereign. Deydras, having no evidence to support this assumption, was hanged for his treasonable attempt to excite sedition.—Walsingham.

Queen Isabella accompanied her lord into the north, and while he advanced to Berwick, she, with her young family, took up her abode at Brotherton, the former residence of her late aunt, queen Marguerite. This was a place of apparent security, as it was nearly a hundred miles from the scene of war; yet she was exposed to a very great peril while residing there, in the year 1319, during the absence of the king, in consequence of a daring attempt of earl Douglas to surprise her in her retreat, and carry her off into Scotland. The monk of Malmesbury gives the following account of this adventure: "Douglas marched into England at the head of 10,000 men with great secrecy, and nearly arrived at the village where queen Isabella and her children resided, when one of his scouts fell into the hands of the archbishop of York, the king's councillor, who threatening him with torture, the man promised him, if they would spare him, to confess the great danger their queen was in. The ministers laughed his intelligence to scorn, till he staked his life that, if they sent scouts in the direction he pointed out, they would find Douglas and his host within a few hours' march of the queen's retreat. Alarmed by the proofs given by the man, they collected all their retinue, and all the men-at-arms York could furnish, and marched on a sudden to the queen's residence with the tidings of her great danger: they removed her to York, and afterwards, for the greater security, she was taken to Nottingham." It was affirmed that Bruce had bribed Lancaster to contrive this diversion from the siege of Berwick.

The local histories of Peterborough record, that Edward and Isabella put an end to a furious dispute between the abbot and the town, as to who should be at the cost of repairing the broken bridge, by sending word that they and their son, prince John, intended to take up their lodgings at the abbey. This intimation caused the abbot to repair it in a hurry, for the passage of the royal pair and their retinue. The queen was presented with twenty pounds by the town, and cost the abbot, in presents and entertainments, more than four hundred pounds. On another occasion she quartered her eldest son Edward, and the two princesses her daughters, with their attendants, on the abbot for eight weeks, which entailed an enormous expense on the community. In 1321 the storm gathered among the lords-marchers, which led to fresh civil wars, and brought Isabella and Roger Mortimer into personal acquaintance;[1] after which Isabella exchanged the lovely character of a peace-maker for that of a vindictive political agitator, and finally branded her once-honoured name with the foul stains of adultery, treason, and murder.

On the 13th of October, 1321, the Queen set out on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas-à-Becket at Canterbury, and proposing to pass the night at her own castle of Leeds, of which Bartholomew Badlesmere, one of the 'associated barons,' was castellan, she sent her marshal and purveyors before her to announce her intention, and to order proper arrangements to be made for her reception.[2] Badlesmere was absent at that time, and being deeply involved in the treasonable designs of the earl of Lancaster, had charged his lady to maintain the castle, though it was a royal demesne, being one of the dower-palaces of the queens of England. Lady Badlesmere, feeling some mistrust of the real object of Isabella in demanding admittance for herself and train, replied with great insolence to the royal messengers, "that the queen might seek some other lodging, for she would not admit any one within the castle without an order from her lord." While the dispute was proceeding between the lady Badlesmere and the harbingers, the queen and her train arrived at the castle-gates and were received with a volley of arrows, which slew six of the royal escort, and compelled the queen to retreat with precipitation, and to seek other shelter for the night.[1]

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[1] King Edward had married his new favourite, the young Despencer, to his great-niece Eleanor, one of the co-heiresses of his nephew Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, who had been the most potent among the lord-marchers of Wales, and a sort of lord-paramount over them all. The warlike Mortimers, during the long minorities of the two last earls of Gloucester, had taken the lead among the marchers; and now the king's favourite, in right of his wife, assumed a sort of supremacy on the Welsh borders, and prevailed on the king to resume the grants of some of his late nephew's castles which he had given to the Mortimers. Those fierce chiefs flew to arms with their marchmen, and in the course of a few nights harried lady Despencer's inheritance with so hearty a good will, that they did many thousand pounds' worth of mischief. The leaders of this exploit were lord Roger Mortimer of Chirk, and his nephew and heir, lord Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, who had been the ward and pupil of Gaveston. The uniform of Mortimer's forces when they marched to London (when mustering against the Despencers) was green, with the right arm yellow. The revolt ended in the surrender of the Mortimers, and their committal to the Tower. The extraordinary influence the younger Mortimer exercised over the destiny of the queen, requires these few words of explanation as to the origin of this rebellion.

[2] Walsingham. De la Moor.

The queen complained bitterly to the king of the affront she had received, and entreated him to avenge the murder of her servants, and the insolence of lady Badlesmere in presuming to exclude her from her own castle.[2] Badlesmere had the folly to write the most insulting letter to the queen, in reply to the complaints that had been addressed to him of his wife's conduct, expressing his entire approval of what she had done. This conduct was aggravated by the fact, that Badlesmere had very lately been one of the principal officers of the palace, and held the high station of steward to the royal household before Edward gave him the appointment as castellan of Leeds. The whole transaction implies some previous personal quarrel with the queen. Hitherto Isabella had been on the most amicable terms with the barons, but as neither Lancaster nor any of the associates thought proper to express any reprobation of the disrespect with which she had been treated by their confederate, she determined to be revenged on all; and accordingly represented to the king, that if he raised an army for the purpose of besieging Leeds-castle, he would eventually be enabled to use it for the extension of his kingly power.[3] The king would willingly have temporized, but the haughty spirit of Isabella would not permit him to delay becoming the minister of her vengeance. Edward published his manifesto, setting forth the contempt with which "his beloved consort Isabella queen of England had been treated by the family of Bartholomew Badlesmere, who had insolently opposed her in her desire of entering Leeds-castle, and that the said Bartholomew Badlesmere had by his letters approved of this misconduct of his family in thus obstructing and contumeliously treating the queen; for which cause, a general muster of all persons between the ages of sixteen and sixty was called to attend the king in an expedition against Leeds-castle."[1]

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[1] Walsingham. De la Moor.

[2] Leeds-castle was a part of the splendid dower settled by Edward I. on queen Marguerite, Isabella's aunt, to which queen Isabella had succeeded.—Rymer's Fœdera.

[3] Rapin.

A large force, of which the Londoners formed a considerable portion, was quickly levied, for the queen was the darling of the nation, and all were eager to avenge even the shadow of a wrong that was offered to her. The lady Badlesmere, who was undoubtedly a notable virago, treated the royal threats with contempt, and with her seneschal, Walter Colepepper, defied both the king and his army when they appeared beneath the walls of Leeds-castle, which was well stored with provisions, and she confidently relied on receiving prompt relief from the associate barons. In this, however, she was disappointed, for the earl of Lancaster had no intention to come to a rupture with the queen, his niece, so the castle was compelled to surrender at discretion on the last day of October. Immediate vengeance was taken by the king, for the assault on the queen and her servants, on the seneschal Walter Colepepper, who, with eleven of the garrison, were hanged before the castle-gates.[2] Lady Badlesmere was committed to the Tower of London as a state-prisoner, and was threatened with the same fate that had been inflicted on her agents; but it does not appear that she suffered any worse punishment than a long and rigorous imprisonment.[3] With all their faults, there is no instance of any monarch of the Plantagenet line putting a lady to death for high treason.

Flushed with his success at Leeds, king Edward recalled his banished favourites, the two Despencers, whose counsels quite accorded with the previous persuasions of the queen to use the military force he had levied for the reduction of Leeds-castle, for the purpose of repressing the power of the associate barons.[4] Isabella was so deeply offended with the barons, as the allies of the Badlesmeres, that she not only refused to employ her influence in composing the differences between them and the king, but did every thing in her power to influence the mind of her lord against them. Lancaster was taken at the battle of Boroughbridge, where the sovereign fought in person against the associate barons, March 16th, 1322. He and ninety-five of his adherents, were conducted as prisoners to Pontefract-castle, where the king sat in judgment upon him, with a small jury of peers, by whom he was sentenced to lose his head. The queen, who for greater security had retired to the Tower to await her accouchement, was not aware of her uncle's sentence till after his execution, which took place only a few hours after his doom was pronounced.[1]

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iii.

[2] Walsingham. Rapin.

[3] Bayley's History of the Tower.

[4] Walsingham. Rapin.

It was at this agitating period that Isabella gave birth to her youngest child, the princess Joanna, who was called, from the place of her nativity, Joanna de la Tour.[2] Some time before the birth of this infant, the two Mortimers, uncle and nephew, having been taken in arms against the king, were brought to the Tower as state-prisoners, under sentence of death and confiscation of their great estates.[3] Roger Mortimer, lord of Chirk, the uncle, died of famine, through the neglect or cruelty of his gaolers in failing to supply him with the necessaries of life, it has been said, soon after his capture. Roger Mortimer, the nephew, was in the pride and vigour of manhood, and possessed of strength of constitution and energy of mind to struggle with any hardship to which he might be exposed. The manner in which he contrived, while under sentence of death in one of the prison lodgings of the Tower of London, to create so powerful an interest in the heart of the beautiful consort of his offended sovereign, is not related by any of the chroniclers of that reign. It is possible, however, that Isabella's disposition for intermeddling in political matters, might have emboldened this handsome and audacious rebel to obtain personal interviews with her, under the colour of being willing to communicate to her the secrets of his party. He was the husband of a French lady, Jane de Joinville, the heiress of sir Peter Joinville, and was in all probability only too well acquainted with the language that was most pleasing to the ear of the queen and the manners and refinements of her native land, which in civilization was greatly in advance of the bellicose realm of England. Be this as it may, Mortimer was reprieved through the good offices of some powerful intercessor, and the king commuted his sentence of death into perpetual imprisonment in the Tower. This occasioned some astonishment, when it was remembered that Mortimer was the first who had commenced the civil war by his fierce attack on the lands of Hugh Despencer, who was his sworn foe, and who at this very time had regained more than his former sway in the councils of king Edward; but at that period the influence of the queen with her royal husband was paramount to any other, and it was probably on this account that the deadly feud commenced between her and the two Despencers, which ended so fatally for both.[1]

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[1] Bartholomew Badlesmere, the primary cause of the war, was taken at Stowe-Park, the seat of his nephew, the bishop of Lincoln, and ignominiously hanged at Canterbury.

[2] De la Moor. Walsingham. Bayley's History of the Tower. Brayley and Britton's ditto.

[3] Walsingham, &c. De la Moor.

The following precept was addressed by king Edward to his treasurer and the barons of the Exchequer, for the supply of his own and the queen's wardrobe:—

> "EDWARD, by the grace of God, &c. &c.
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> "We command that ye provide sixteen pieces of cloth for the apparelling of ourselves and our dear companion, also furs, against the next feast of Christmas, and thirteen pieces of cloth for corsets for our said companion and her damsels, with naping linen[2] and other things of which we stand in need against the said feast: requiring you to assign to William Cassonces, the clerk of our wardrobe, one hundred and fifteen pounds, in such manner as may obtain prompt payment of the same for this purpose.
>
> "Given at Langley, the 10th day of December, and of our reign the 15th."[3]

The king and Isabella spent their Christmas together, and it is probable that she availed herself of that opportunity of obtaining, not only so unconscionable an allowance of cloth for her corsets, but a reprieve from death for Mortimer.

In the succeeding year, 1323, we find the tameless border chief, from his dungeon in the Tower, organizing a plan for the seizure, not only of that royal fortress, but Windsor and Wallingford. Again was Mortimer condemned to suffer death for high treason, but through the agency of Adam Orleton, and Beck bishop of Durham, he obtained a respite.[1] On the 1st of August, the same year, Gerard Alspaye, the valet of Segrave the constable of the Tower, who was supposed to be in co-operation with him, gave the men-at-arms a soporific potion in their drink provided by the queen; and while the guards were asleep, Mortimer passed through a hole he had worked in his own prison into the kitchen of the royal residence, ascended the chimney, got on the roof of the palace, and from thence to the Thames' side by a ladder of ropes. Segrave's valet then took a sculler and rowed him over to the opposite bank of the river, where they found a party of seven horsemen, Mortimer's vassals, waiting to receive him. With this guard he made his way to the coast of Hampshire; from thence, pretending to sail to the Isle of Wight, the boat in reality conveyed the fugitives on board a large ship, provided by Ralf Botton, a London merchant, which was anchored off the Needles: this ship landed them safely in Normandy, whence they proceeded to Paris.[2] Edward was in Lancashire when he heard of the escape of Mortimer: he roused all England with a hue and cry after him, but does not seem to have had the least idea of his destination, as he sought him chiefly in the Mortimers' hereditary demesnes,—the marches of Wales.

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[1] Walsingham. De la Moor. Rapin. [2] Table-linen. [3] Rot. Edw. II. 47.

Meantime, the queen commenced her deep-laid schemes for the ruin of Mortimer's enemies, the Despencers, whom she taught the people to regard as the cause of the sanguinary executions of Lancaster and his adherents, though her own impatient desire of avenging the affronts she had received from lady Badlesmere had been the means of exasperating the sovereign against that party. Now she protested against all the punishments that had been inflicted, and was the first who pretended to regard Lancaster as a martyr and a saint. The two Despencers had succeeded in obtaining the same sort of ascendancy over the mind of the king that had been once enjoyed by Gaveston; they were his principal ministers of state, and they had ventured to curtail the revenues of the queen. This imprudent step afforded her a plausible excuse for declaring open hostilities against them. No one had ever offended her without paying a deadly penalty. She perceived that she had lost her influence with her royal husband during his absence in the civil war in the north, and though it is evident that an illicit passion on her part had preceded the alienation of the king's regard for her, she did not complain the less loudly of her wrongs on that account; neither did she scruple to brand the Despencers with all the accusations she had formerly hurled at Gaveston, charging them with having deprived her of the love of her royal husband.[1] A fierce struggle for supremacy between her and the Despencers, during the year 1324, ended in the discharge of all her French servants, and the substitution of an inadequate pension for herself, instead of the royal demesnes which had been settled on her by the king.[2] Isabella wrote her indignant complaints of this treatment to her brother, Charles le Bel, who had just succeeded to the throne of France, declaring, "that she was held in no higher consideration than a servant in the palace of the king her husband," whom she styled *a gripple miser,*[3] a character which the thoughtless and prodigal Edward was very far from deserving. The king of France, exasperated by his sister's representations of her wrongs, made an attack on Guienne, which afforded an excuse to the Despencers for advising king Edward to deprive the queen of her last possession in England,—the earldom of Cornwall. The king resumed this grant in a peculiarly disobliging manner, giving the queen to understand "that he did not consider it safe to allow any portion of his territories to remain in her hands, as she maintained a secret correspondence with the enemies of the state."[4]

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[1] Leland's Collectanea.

[2] Rymer. Bayley's History of the Tower. "Mortimer," says the chronicle quoted by Drayton, "being in the Tower, ordered a feast for his birthday; and inviting there sir Stephen Segrave constable of the Tower, with the rest of the officers belonging to the same, gave them a sleepy drink provided him by the queen, by which means he got liberty for his escape: he swam the Thames to the opposite shore, the queen doubting much of his strength for such an exploit, as he had been long in confinement."

The feuds between the royal pair proceeded to such a height, that Isabella denied her company to her lord,[1] and he refused to come where she was.[2] The queen passionately charged this estrangement on the Despencers, and reiterated her complaints to her brother. King Charles testified his indignant sense of his sister's treatment, by declaring his intention of seizing all the provinces held by king Edward of the French crown, he having repeatedly summoned him in vain to perform the accustomed homage for them. Edward was not prepared to engage in a war for their defence, and neither he nor his ministers liked the alternative of a personal visit to the court of the incensed brother of queen Isabella, after the indignities that had been offered to her.[3] In this dilemma, Isabella herself obligingly volunteered to act as mediatrix between the two monarchs, provided she might be permitted to go to Paris to negotiate a pacification. Edward, who had so often been extricated from his political difficulties by the diplomatic talents of his fair consort, was only too happy to avail himself of her proposal.[4]

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[1] Walsingham. De la Moor.

[2] Walsingham. Rapin. Speed.

[3] De la Moor. Speed.

[4] Walsingham. Rapin.

It has been asserted by many historians, that queen Isabella privately withdrew to France with her son, the prince of Wales, to claim the protection of her brother, Charles le Bel, against the king her husband, and his ministers the Despencers; but a careful reference to those authorities which may be called the fountain-heads of history,—the Record rolls of that reign, will satisfactorily prove that she was sent as an accredited envoy from the deluded Edward, to negotiate this treaty with her royal brother. Froissart, who purposely veils the blackest traits of Isabella's character, her profound hypocrisy and treachery, represents her as flying from the barbarous persecutions of her husband and the Despencers, like some distressed queen of romance, and engaging, by her beauty and eloquence, all the chivalric spirits of France and Hainault to arm for the redress of her wrongs. He has succeeded in giving just such a colour to her proceedings as would be least offensive to her son Edward III., with whom, for obvious reasons, the whole business must have been a peculiarly sore subject.[5]

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[1] De la Moor. [2] Froissart. [3] Carte. Rapin. [4] Ibid.

[5] It is to be remembered that Froissart, who, though a contemporary, was too young, at the time these events took place, to speak from his own knowledge,

The propriety of the queen undertaking the mission to the court of France was debated, first in the council, and afterwards in the parliament which met January 21st,[1] 1325, to consider the affairs of Guienne, when it was agreed that any expedient was better than pursuing the war.[2] A hollow reconciliation was effected between Isabella and the Despencers, who were delighted at the prospect of her departure from England, and she parted from her husband, apparentl on terms of confidence and good-will. Isabella sailed for France in the beginning of May, attended by the lord John Cromwell and four knights. She landed at Calais and proceeded to Paris, where the first fruit of her mediation was a truce between her brother and the king her husband. She then negotiated an amicable treaty, proposing the surrender of Guienne, already forfeited by the neglect of the feudal homage to the king of France, which was to be restored, at her personal instances, by her brother to the king of England, on condition of his performing the accustomed homage, and remunerating the king of France for the expenses of the war. This was to take place at a friendly interview between the two monarchs at Beauvais.[3]

The Despencers, anticipating with alarm the great probability of the queen regaining her wonted ascendancy over the mind of her royal husband, dissuaded him from crossing to the shores of France, even when his preparations for the voyage were completed. Isabella, who was well informed of these demurs, and perfectly understood the vacillating character of her husband, proposed to him that he should invest their son, the prince of Wales, with the duchy of Guienne and the earldom of Ponthieu, and send him as his substitute to perform the homage for those countries to the king her brother,—king Charles having signified his assent to such an arrangement, in compliance with her solicitations. King

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has followed what he calls the "true chronicle" of John le Bel, canon of St. Lambert of Liege, who was the favourite counsellor and confessor of John of Hainault, the sworn champion of queen Isabella, of whose iniquities the sly ecclesiastic is a subtle palliator, and has evidently done his best to mystify such parts of her conduct as were indefensible.

[1] Walsingham. Public Act. [2] Ibid. [3] Rymer's Fœdera.

Edward, far from suspecting the guileful intentions of his consort, eagerly complied with this proposal; and the Despencers, not being possessed of sufficient penetration to understand the motives which prompted the queen to get the heir of England into her own power, fell into the snare. On the 12th of September, 1325, prince Edward, attended by the bishops of Oxford, Exeter, and a splendid train of nobles and knights, sailed from Dover;[1] landing at Boulogne, he was joined by the queen his mother on the 14th, who accompanied him to Paris, where his first interview with the king his uncle took place in her presence, and he performed the act of feudal homage on the 21st at the Bois de Vincennes.[2]

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera.

[2] "Act made at the wood of Vincennes by Edward (son of Edward II.), in the presence of the queen his mother, and many grandees of England." . . . . After the usual formula regarding the homage of Guienne, a clause is added, in these words:—"And as for the country of Ponthieu, according to the protestation made by madame the queen of England, then present, the homage done by the prince her son was not in any way to prejudice her interests therein, and the said Edward promises to hold peace for his father; 1335, the 14th September."—Abstract of the French Act, copied from Harleian MSS.

ISABELLA OF FRANCE,

SURNAMED THE FAIR,

QUEEN OF EDWARD II.

CHAPTER II.

Isabella's intrigues—Queen and prince recalled to England—Her disobedience—King Edward's letters—Barons invite her to invade England—Familiarities with Mortimer—Scandal at the French court—Isabella dismissed from France—Her visit to Hainault—Her voyage to England—Lands—Enthusiasm of the people—Proclamation—Her triumphal progress—Capture of the king—Londoners welcome the queen—Deposition of Edward II.—Queen's hypocrisy—Seizes the government—Exorbitant dower—Her ball prevented by a popular tumult—Murder of the king—Isabella's peace with Scotland—League against the queen—Her vindictive disposition—Follies of Mortimer—Parliament at Nottingham—Isabella's precautions—Mortimer taken prisoner—Her passionate intercession—His execution—Her imprisonment—Manner of spending her time there—Reports of her madness—Visits of her son—References to her in the parliamentary rolls—Her household at Castle-Rising—Visited by Edward III. and Philippa—Death of Isabella—Entrance of her funeral into London—Buried by Mortimer's side.

The wording of the treaty negotiated between Isabella and her brother, the king of France, was couched in such ambiguous terms, as to leave considerable matter for dispute between king Edward and that monarch, even after the required homage had been performed by the heir of England for the fiefs held of the French crown. This difference, which regarded the province of Agenois, had been contrived by Isabella, to afford a plausible pretext for prolonging her stay in Paris She was there joined by her paramour Mortimer, and all the banished English lords flocked round her.[1] She held frequent councils and meetings with the declared enemies of king Edward's person and government, and she altogether avoided the commissioners[2] by whose advice the king had appointed her to be guided. The English ambassadors were surprised and offended at the conduct of the queen, and the frivolousness of the pretences on which she from day to day delayed her departure from Paris. But Walter Stapleton, the loyal bishop of Exeter, whom she had endeavoured to draw into her conspiracy, withdrew to England, informed the king of her proceedings, and urged him to command her immediate return with the prince of Wales.[3] King Edward wrote urgent letters and royal summonses to his consort and son for that purpose: his most peremptory orders were disregarded by Isabella, who asserted "that it was the intention of the Despencers to cause her to be put to death, if she returned to England;" on which the king of France, her brother, wrote to king Edward, "that he could not permit her to return to him, unless she were guaranteed from the evil that was meditated against her by her enemies the Despencers."[4]

King Edward's manly and eloquent reply to this letter is preserved among the Close record-rolls of the nineteenth year of his reign. We translate it from the ancient French copy, printed in the fourth volume of Rymer's Fœdera:—

"VERY DEAR AND BELOVED BROTHER,

"We have received, and well considered, your letters delivered to us by the honourable father in God, the bishop of Winchester, who has also discoursed with us, by word of mouth, on the contents of the said letters.

"It seems that you have been told, dearest brother, by persons whom you consider worthy of credit, that our companion, the queen of England, dare not return to us, being in peril of her life, as she apprehends, from Hugh le Despencer. Certes, dearest brother, it cannot be that she can have fear of him, or any other man in our realm; since, *par Dieu!* if either Hugh or any other living being in our dominions would wish to do her ill, and it came to our knowledge, we would chastise him in a manner that should be an example to all others; and this is, and always will be, our entire will, as long as, by God's mercy, we have the power. And, dearest brother, know certainly that we have never perceived that he has, either secretly or openly, by word, look, or action, demeaned himself otherwise than he ought in all points to do, to so very dear a lady. And when we remember the amiable looks and words between them that we have seen, and the great friendship she professed for him before she crossed the sea, and the loving letters which she has lately sent him, which he has shown to us, we have no power to believe that our consort can, of herself, credit such things of him; we cannot in any way believe it of him, who, after our own person, is the man, of all our realm, who would most wish to do her honour, and has always shown good sincerity to you. We pray you, dearest brother, not to give credence to any one who would make you otherwise suppose; but to put your faith in those who have always borne true witness to you in other things, and who have the best reason to know the truth of this matter. Wherefore we beseech you, dearest brother, both for your honour and ours, but more especially for that oi our said consort, that you would compel her to return to us with all speed; for, certes, we have been ill at ease for the want of her company, in which we have much delight; and if our surety and safe-conduct is not enough, then let her come to us on the pledge of *your* good faith for us.

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[1] De la Moor. Walsingham.

[2] Ibid.

[3] MS. Lives of the Lord Treasurers, by Francis Thynne, esq.; in the collection of sir Thomas Phillipps, bart., at Middle Hill.

[4] De la Moor. Walsingham. Rapin. Speed.

"We also entreat you, dearly beloved brother, that you would be pleased to deliver up to us Edward, our beloved eldest son, your nephew; and that, of your love and affection to him, you would render to him the lands of the duchy,[1] that he be not disinherited, which we cannot suppose you wish. Dearly beloved brother, we pray you to suffer him to come to us with all speed, for we have often sent for him, and we greatly wish to see him and to speak with him, and every day we long for his return.

"And, dearest brother, at this time the honourable father in God, Walter bishop of Exeter, has returned to us, having certified to us that his person was in peril from some of our banished enemies, and we, having great need of his counsel, enjoined him on his faith and allegiance to return forthwith, leaving all other matters in the best way he could. We pray you, therefore, to excuse the sudden departure of the said bishop, for the cause before said.

"Given at Westminster, the first day of December," (1325).

Edward's letter to Isabella herself, on the same subject, is exceedingly temperate, but evidently written under a deep sense of injury, and with a formal courtesy very different from the friendly and confidential style in which he addresses her brother, as our readers will perceive:—

KING EDWARD TO QUEEN ISABELLA.

"LADY,

"Oftentimes have we informed you, both before and after the homage, our great desire to have you with us, and of our grief of heart at your long absence; and as we understand that you do us great mischief by this, we will that you come to us with all speed, and without further excuses.

"Before the homage was performed, you made the advancement of that business an excuse; and now that we have sent by the honourable father, the bishop of Winchester, our safe-conduct to you, 'you will not come for the fear and doubt of Hugh le Despencer!' Whereat we cannot marvel too much, when we recall your flattering deportment towards each other in our presence, so amicable and sweet was your deportment, with special assurances and looks, and other tokens of the firmest friendship, and also, since then, your very especial letters to him of late date, which he has shown to us.

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[1] Aquitaine, for which the young prince had gone to Paris to do his homage to Charles.

"And certes, lady, we know for truth, and so know you, that he has always procured from us all the honour he could for you, nor to you has either evil or villany been done since you entered into our companionship; unless, peradventure, as you may yourself remember, once, when we had cause to give you secretly some words of reproof for your pride, but without other harshness: and, doubtless, both God and the law of our holy church require you to honour us, and for nothing earthly to trespass against our commandments, or to forsake our company. And we are much displeased, now the homage has been made to our dearest brother, the king of France, and we have such fair prospect of amity, that you, whom we sent to make the peace, should be the cause (which God forefend) of increasing the breach between us by things which are feigned and contrary to the truth. Wherefore we charge you as urgently as we can, that ceasing from all pretences, delays, and excuses,[1] you come to us with all the haste you can. Our said bishop has reported to us that our brother, the king of France, told you in his presence, 'that, by the tenour of your safe-conduct, you would not be delayed or molested in coming to us as a wife should to her lord.' And as to your expenses, when it shall be that you will come to us as a wife should to her lord, we will provide that there shall be no deficiency in aught that is pertaining to you, and that you be not in any way dishonoured by us. Also, we require of you that our dear son Edward return to us with all possible speed, for we much desire to see him and to speak with him."[2]

King Edward, in conclusion, repeats to the queen the same observations on the sudden return of the bishop of Exeter, which our readers have seen in his letter to her brother, the king of France. Both letters are dated on the same day, December 1, 1325. His letter to the prince of Wales, dated the next day, is as follows:—

"VERY DEAR SON,

"As you are young and of tender age, we remind you of that which we charged and commanded you at your departure from Dover, and you answered then, as we know with good will, 'that you would not trespass or disobey any of our injunctions in any point for any one.' And since that your homage has been received by our dearest brother, the king of France, your uncle, be pleased to take your leave of him, and return to us with all speed in company with your mother, if so be that she will come quickly; and if she will not come, then come *you* without further delay, for we have great desire to see you, and to speak with you: therefore stay not for your mother, nor for any one else, on our blessing.

"Given at Westminster, the 2nd day of December."

It is matter of regret that the replies to these most interesting letters have not been preserved among our national records; but the substance of them may be gathered from king Edward's urgent and touching appeals[3] to the prince their son, and to her brother, the king of France:—

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[1] *Scusacion* is the word used in the original.

[2] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iv.; from the Close Rolls, 19th Edw. II.

[3] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. i. p. 182.

"EDWARD, FAIR SON,

"We understand by your letters written in reply to ours, that you remember well the charge we gave you; among other things, not to contract marriage, nor to suffer it to be contracted for you, without our knowledge and consent; and also that at your departure from Dover you said, 'that it should be your pleasure to obey our commandments, as far as you could, all your days.'

"Fair son, if thus you have done, you have done wisely and well, and according to your duty, so as to have grace of God of us and all men; and if not, then you cannot avoid the wrath of God, the reproach of men, and our great indignation, for we charged you so lately and so strictly that you should remember well these things, and that you should by no means marry, nor suffer yourself to be married, without our previous consent and advice; for no other thing that you could do would occasion greater injury and pain of heart to us. And inasmuch as it seems you say 'you cannot return to us because of your mother,' it causes us great uneasiness of heart that you cannot be allowed by her to do that which is your natural duty, the neglect of which will lead to much mischief.

"Fair son, you know how dearly she would have been loved and cherished, if she had timely come according to her duty to her lord. We have knowledge of much of her evil doings, to our sorrow; how that she devises pretences for absenting herself from us, on account of our dear and faithful nephew,[1] H. le Despencer, who has always so well and loyally served us, while you and all the world have seen that she openly, notoriously, and knowing it to be contrary to her duty, and against the welfare of our crown, has attracted to herself, and retains in her company, the Mortimer, our traitor and mortal foe, proved, attainted, and adjudged; and *him* she accompanies in the house and abroad in despite of us, of our crown, and the right ordering of the realm—him, the malefactor,[2] whom our beloved brother the king of France at our request banished from his dominions as our enemy! And worse than this she has done, *if* worse than *this* can be, in allowing you to consort with our said enemy, making him your counsellor, and you openly to herd and associate with him in the sight of all the world, doing so great a villany and dishonour both to yourself and us, to the prejudice of our crown, and of the laws and customs of our realm, which *you* are supremely bound to hold, preserve, and maintain.

"Wherefore, fair son, desist you from a part which is so shameful, and may be to you perilous and injurious in too many ways. We are not pleased with you, and neither for your mother, nor for any other, ought you to displease us. We charge you by the faith, love, and allegiance which you owe us, and on our blessing, that you come to us without opposition, delay, or any further excuse; for your mother has written to us, 'that if you wish to return to us she will not prevent it,' and we do not understand that your uncle the king detains you against the form of your safe-conduct. In no manner, then, either for your mother or to go to the duchy, nor for any other cause, delay to come to us. Our commands are for your good, and for your honour, by the help of God Come quickly, then, without further excuse, if you would have our blessing, and avoid our reproach and indignation.

"It is our wish to order all things for the good of the duchy, and our other dominions, for our mutual honour and benefit. If John of Bretagne, and John de Cromwell, will come in your company, they will do their duty.

"Fair son, trespass not against our commands, for we hear much that you have done of things you ought not.

"Given at Lichfield, the 18th day of March."[3]

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[1] King Edward bestows this appellation on the favourite, because he was the husband of his great-niece the heiress of Gloucester.

[2] *Malveys* is the word used in the original French by the incensed king.

[3] Rymer's Fœdera; from the Close Rolls of the 19th year of Edward II

From the tenour of this letter, it is evident that Edward II. had been informed of his queen's clandestine and certainly most unconstitutional proceedings with regard to contracting their son, the youthful heir of England, in marriage, without his knowledge or the consent of parliament. This was the more annoying to the king, because he was himself negotiating a matrimonial alliance between the prince of Wales and the infanta Eleanora of Arragon, long before the departure of the queen to the court of France. Matters were indeed so far advanced, that application had been made to the pope for a dispensation,[1] when the whole scheme was traversed by her plighting the prince to the daughter of the count of Hainault. It seems that the bride's portion, which was paid in advance, was required by Isabella to support herself against her unhappy lord, to whom, however, she continued to hold out unmeaning professions of her dutiful inclinations, as we perceive from his reply to one of the letters addressed to him by her brother, the king of France:—

"DEAREST BROTHER,

"We have considered well your letters, in which you signify that you have spoken with good diligence to your sister, touching the things on which we have replied to you, and that she has told you, 'that it is her desire to be with us, and in our company, as a good wife ought to be in that of her lord; and that the friendship between her and our dear and faithful nephew H. le Despencer was but feigned on her part, because she saw it was expedient for her support in past time, and to secure herself from worse treatment.' Certes, dearest brother, if she loved us, she would desire to be in our company, as she has said. She who ought to be the mediatress between us of entire and lasting peace, should not be the cause of stirring up fresh strife, as she has done, when she was sent to nourish peace and love between you and us, which we intended in all good faith when we sent her to you; but the thought of her heart was to devise that pretence for withdrawing from us. We have already shown you that what she has told you is, saving your reverence, not the truth, for never (so much as she has done against us) has she received either evil or villany from us, or from any other. Neither has she had any occasion 'for feints to support herself in times passed, nor to escape from worse,'[2] for never in the slightest instance has evil been done to her by him;[3] and since she has departed from us and come to you, what has compelled her to send to our dear and trusty nephew, H. le Despencer, letters of such great and especial amity as she has been pleased to do from time to time?

"But truly, dearest brother, it must be as apparent to you as to us, and to all men, that she does not love us as she ought to love her lord; and the cause why she has spoken falsehoods of our nephew, and withdrawn herself from us, proceeds, according to my thoughts, from a disordered will, when she so openly, notoriously, and knowingly, against her duty," &c. &c.

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[1] See Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iv.

[2] These sentences, marked by commas, are evidently quotations from Isabella's representations.

[3] Hugh le Despencer. Yet the deprivation of the queen's revenue was a serious injury; its restoration must have taken place directly, or the queen would have urged it at this time as a matter of complaint.

Here king Edward passionately repeats the same observations respecting Isabella's shameless intimacy with Mortimer, of which he had made use in the preceding letter to the prince his son, and then proceeds,—

"If you wished her well, dearest brother, you would chastise her for this misconduct, and make her demean herself as she ought, for the honour of all those to whom she belongs. Then our son, dearest brother, is made also by his mother your sister, the companion of our said traitor and foe, who is his counsellor in delaying his return, in our despite."

Some requests touching Guienne follow, and after repeating his entreaties for his son to be restored to him, king Edward concludes in the following words:—

"And that you will be pleased to do these things, dearest brother, for the sake of God, reason, good faith, and natural fraternity, without paying regard to the light pleasaunce of a woman, is our desire.

"Given at Lichfield, the 18th of March."

After this letter, Charles le Bel is said to have looked very coolly on his sister, and even to have urged her to return, with her son, to the royal husband. Isabella had other intentions, having gone too far, she felt, to recede, without incurring in reality the perils which she had before pretended to dread. Her party in England had now, through the malignant activity of her especial agent, Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, become so strong, that about this time she received a deputation from the confederate barons, assuring her "that if she could only raise a thousand men, and would come with the prince to England at the head of that force, they would place him on the throne to govern under her guidance."[1] Already by her persuasions and fair promises she had secured the assistance of many young nobles and military adventurers, who were ready to engage in her cause.[2] The Despencers had information of her proceedings, and, if we may trust the assertions of Froissart, they circumvented her by the skilful distribution of counter bribes among the ministers of the king of France, and even addressed their golden arguments to king Charles himself so successfully, that he withdrew his countenance from his royal sister, and forbade any person, under pain of punishment, to aid or assist her in her projected invasion of England.[1] Less partial historians, however, attribute this change in king Charles's politics to the scandal which his sister's conduct with regard to Mortimer excited in his court. The remonstrances contained in the following letter from king Edward had also, perhaps, some effect:—

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[1] Walsingham. De la Moor. Froissart.

[2] Froissart.

"Most dear and beloved Brother,

"We would wish you to remember that we have, at different times, signified to you by our letters how improperly your sister our wife has conducted herself in withdrawing from us and refusing to return at our command, while she so notoriously has attached to her company and consorts with our traitor and mortal enemy the Mortimer, and our other enemies there, and also makes Edward, our son and heir, an adherent of the same our enemy, to our great shame, and that of every one of her blood; and if you wish her well, you ought, both for your own honour and ours, to have these things duly redressed."

After reiterating his earnest entreaties for the restoration of the prince, his son, "who is," he observes, "of too tender an age to guide and govern himself, and therefore ought to be under his paternal care," king Edward implores him to put his son in possession of the duchy for which he had performed the homage as stipulated, and that without dwelling too particularly on the wording of the covenant, (which had evidently been designedly mystified by the contrivance of Isabella); he adds,—

"But these things are as nothing: it is the herding of our said wife and son with our traitors and mortal enemies that notoriously continues; insomuch, that the said traitor, the Mortimer, was carried in the train of our said son publicly to Paris at the solemnity of the coronation of our very dear sister your wife, the queen of France, at the Pentecost just passed, to our great shame, and in despite of us.

"Wherefore, dearest brother, we pray you, as earnestly as we can, by the rights and blessings of peace, and the entire friendship that subsists between us, that you will of your benevolence effectually attend to our supreme desire that we be not thus dishonoured, and our son disinherited, which we cannot suppose you wish.

"Dearest brother, you ought to feel for us, and so should all men of our estate, for much we are, and much we have been, grieved at the shameful despites and great injury which we have so long endured. Nay, verily, brother-in-law, but we cannot bear it longer. The Holy Spirit have charge of you."[2]

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[1] Froissart.

[2] Rymer's Fœdera; from the Close Rolls of the 19th year of Edward II.

In the month of June, 1326, king Edward made a last fruitless attempt to prevail on the prince, his son, to withdraw himself from the evil counsels and companions of the queen, his mother, and to return to him. This letter, like the preceding correspondence, affords indubitable evidence how accurately the unfortunate husband of Isabella was informed of her proceedings with regard to Mortimer:—

"EDWARD, FAIR SON,

"We have seen by your letters lately written to us, that you well remember the charges we enjoined you on your departure from Dover, and that you have not transgressed our commands in any point that was in your power to avoid. But to us it appears that you have not humbly obeyed our commands as a good son ought his father, since you have not returned to us to be under government, as we have enjoined you by our other letters, on our blessing; but have notoriously held companionship, and your mother also, with Mortimer, our traitor and mortal enemy, who, in company with your mother and others, was publicly carried to Paris in your train to the solemnity of the coronation, at Pentecost just past, in signal despite of us, and to the great dishonour both of us and you: for truly he is neither a meet companion for your mother nor for you, and we hold that much evil to the country will come of it.

"Also we understand that you, through counsel which is contrary both to our interest and yours, have proceeded to make divers alterations, injunctions, and ordinances without our advice, and contrary to our orders, in the duchy of Guienne, which we have given you; but you ought to remember the conditions of the gift, and your reply when it was conferred upon you at Dover. These things are inconvenient, and must be most injurious. Therefore we command and charge you, on the faith and love you ought to bear us, and on our blessing, that you show yourself our dear and well-beloved son as you have aforetime done; and, ceasing from all excuses of your mother, or any like those that you have just written, you come to us here with all haste, that we may ordain for you and your state as honourably as you can desire. By right and reason you ought to have no other governor than us, neither should you wish to have.

"Also, fair son, we charge you by no means to marry till you return to us, nor without our advice and consent; nor, for any cause, either go to the duchy, or elsewhere, against our will and command.

"P.S. Edward, fair son, you are of tender age: take our commandments tenderly to heart, and so rule your conduct with humility as you would escape our reproach, our grief and indignation, and advance your own interest and honour. Believe no counsel that is contrary to the will of your father, as the wise king Solomon instructs you. Understand certainly, that if you now act contrary to our counsel, and continue in wilful disobedience, you will feel it all the days of your life, and all other sons will take example to be disobedient to their lords and fathers."[1]

Not only did the evil influence of Isabella prevent the paternal remonstrances of the royal writer from having a proper effect on the mind of her son, but she succeeded in persuading him that she was the object of the most barbarous persecution, both from the Despencers and the king her husband. King Edward sent copies of his letters to the pope,[1] and entreated his interference so effectually, that the pontiff addressed his censures to Charles le Bel on his detention of the queen of England from her royal consort, and charged him, under the penalty of excommunication, to dismiss both Isabella and her son from his dominions. "When king Charles had read these letters," says Froissart, "he was greatly disturbed, and ordered his sister to be made acquainted with their contents, for he had held no conversation with her for a long time; and commanded her to leave his kingdom immediately, or he would make her leave it with shame."[2]

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iv.; from the Close Rolls of 19th Edward II.

"When the queen received this angry and contemptuous message from her brother, she was greatly troubled;" for the French barons had already withdrawn themselves, either, as Froissart states, by the king's commands, or through disgust at the infatuation of her conduct with regard to Mortimer, "and she had no adviser left but her dear cousin, Robert d'Artois;" and he could only assist her secretly, since the king, her brother, had not only said, but sworn, "that whoever should speak in behalf of his sister, the queen of England, should forfeit his lands, and be banished the realm." Robert of Artois had also discovered that a plan was in agitation for delivering queen Isabella, the prince her son, the earl of Kent, and sir Roger Mortimer, to king Edward.[3] "Robert of Artois came in the middle of the night to warn Isabella of the peril in which she stood. The queen was struck with consternation at this intelligence; he strongly urged her to enter the imperial territories, and to throw herself upon the protection of some of the independent German princes, especially William count of Hainault, whose consort was Isabella's first cousin. The queen ordered her baggage to be made ready as secretly as possible, and having *paid every thing*,—(a point of honesty recorded to her credit by Froissart,)—she quitted Paris with her son, and accompanied by Mortimer, and likewise by her husband's brother the earl of Kent, who had been attached to the homage-deputation, and was at this time decidedly her partisan. After some days she came into the country of Cambray. When she found that she was in the territories of the empire, she was more at her ease; she entered Ostrevant, in Hainault, and lodged at the house of a poor knight, called sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt,[1] who received her with great pleasure, and entertained her in the best manner he could, insomuch that afterwards the queen of England and her son invited the knight, his wife, and all his children to England, and advanced their fortunes in various ways.

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[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iv.; from the Close Rolls of the 19th Edward II. Froissart. Walsingham.

[2] Froissart.

[3] Ibid.

"The arrival of the queen of England was soon known in the house of the good count of Hainault, who was then at Valenciennes: sir John, his brother, was likewise informed of the hour when she alighted at the house of the lord of Ambreticourt. This sir John being at that time very young, and panting for glory like a knight-errant, mounted his horse, and accompanied by a few persons set out from Valenciennes, and arrived in the evening to pay the queen every respect and honour." The queen was at this time very dejected, and made a lamentable complaint to him of all her griefs; which affected sir John so much, that he mixed his tears with hers, and said: "Lady, see here your knight, who will not fail to die for you, though every one else should forsake you; therefore I will do every thing in my power to conduct you safely to England with your son, and to restore you to your rank, with the assistance of your friends in those parts; and I, and all those whom I can influence, will risk our lives on the adventure for your sake, and we shall have a sufficient armed force, if it please God, without fearing any danger from the king of France."

The queen, who was sitting down and sir John standing before her, would have cast herself at his feet; but he, gallantly interposing, caught her in his arms and said,—"God forbid that the queen of England should do such a thing! Madam, be of good comfort to yourself and company, for I will keep my promise; and you shall come and see my brother and the countess his wife, and all their fine children, who will be rejoiced to see you, for I have heard them say so." The queen answered: "Sir, I find in you more kindness and comfort than in all the world besides; and I give you five hundred thousand thanks for all you have promised me with so much courtesy. I and my son shall be for ever bound unto you, and we will put the kingdom of England under your management, as in justice it ought to be."[1]

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[1] Froissart.

When Isabella quitted the castle of Ambreticourt she told sir Eustace and his lady "that she trusted a time would come when she and her son could acknowledge their courtesy." She then mounted her horse and set off with her train, accompanied by sir John, who with joy and respect conducted her to Valenciennes. Many of the citizens of the town came forth to meet her, and received her with great humility. She was thus conducted to William count of Hainault, who, as well as the countess, received her very graciously. Many great feasts were given on this occasion, as no one knew better than the countess how to do the honours of her house.[2] Queen Isabella remained at Valenciennes during eight days with the good count and his countess, Joanna of Valois. When she was preparing for her departure, John of Hainault wrote very affectionate letters to certain knights-companions, in whom he put great confidence, from Brabant and Bohemia, "beseeching them, by all the friendship there was between them, to arm in the cause of the distressed queen of England."[3]

The armament having assembled at Dort, the queen of England took leave of the count of Hainault and his countess, thanking them much for the honourable entertainment they had shown her, and she kissed them at her departure. Sir John with great difficulty obtained his lord and brother's permission to accompany Isabella. When he took leave of him he said,—"My dear lord and brother, I am young, and believe that God has inspired me with a desire of this enterprise for my advancement. I also believe for certain, that this lady and her son have been driven from their kingdom wrongfully. If it is for the glory of God to comfort the afflicted, how much more is it to help and succour one who is daughter of a king, descended from royal lineage, and to whose blood we ourselves are related! I will renounce every thing here, and go and take up the cross in heathendom beyond seas, if this good lady leaves us without comfort and aid. But if you will grant me a willing leave, I shall do well, and accomplish my purpose."

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[1] Froissart. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

The queen, her son, and suite finally set off, accompanied by sir John, and went that night to Mons, where they slept. They embarked at Dort, according to Froissart, whose account of their voyage and landing on the *terra incognita* between Orford and Harwich is so marvellous, that the simple matter-of-fact details of the chronicle of Flanders appear much more to the purpose: "The fleet was tossed with a great tempest, but made the port about noon, when the queen being got safely on shore, her knights and attendants made her a house with four carpets, open in the front, where they kindled her a great fire of the pieces of wreck, some of their ships having been beaten to pieces in the tempest; meantime the Flemish sailors got on shore before midnight all the horses and arms, and then the ships that had survived the storm sailed (the wind being favourable) to the opposite coast. But the queen, finding herself ill at ease on the stormy sea-beach that night, marched at day-break, with banners displayed, towards the next country town, where she found all the houses amply and well furnished with provisions, but all the people fled." The advanced-guard, meantime, spread themselves over the country, and seized all the cattle and food they could get; and the owners followed them, crying bitterly, into the presence of the queen, who asked them "What was the fair value of the goods?" and when they named the price, she paid them all liberally in ready money. The people were so pleased with this conduct, that they supplied her well with provisions.

"Queen Isabella arrived at Harwich on the 25th of September, 1326,[1] on the domain of Thomas of Brotherton, the king's brother, who was the first that greeted her on her landing.[1] Then she was met and welcomed by her uncle, Henry of Lancaster, and many other barons and knights, and almost all the bishops, notwithstanding the king's proclamation commanding all men to avoid the queen's armament at its first landing." Her force consisted of two thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven foreign soldiers, well appointed, commanded by lord John of Hainault. Mortimer was the leader of her English partisans. As he was a husband, and the father of a numerous family, the question naturally occurs, what became of lady Mortimer while her husband devoted himself as *cavalière servente* to the queen Isabel in France? but the king certainly displayed more than his usual lack of judgment in this matter. When Mortimer escaped to France, Edward seized poor lady Mortimer and her three daughters, and shut them in separate convents,[2] greatly to the satisfaction of the guilty parties, who had nothing to do but to keep them there when they obtained power. If the aggrieved king had possessed common sense, he would have taken some pains to send lady Mortimer and her children to France, who might have proved embarrassing company to the queen.

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[1] History of Harwich, by Silas Taylor.

The historian of Harwich declares that it was wonderful how the common people flocked to queen Isabella on her landing. Every generous feeling in the English character had been worked upon by her emissaries, who had disseminated inflammatory tales of the persecutions she had endured from the king her husband, and his barbarous ministers. It was asserted that she had been driven into a foreign land by plots against her life, and that she was the most oppressed of queens,—the most injured of wives. So blinding was the excitement which, at this crisis, pervaded all classes of the people, that the glaring falsehood of her statements, as to the cause of her quitting England, was forgotten; the improprieties of her conduct, which had excited the disgust of her own countrymen, and caused the king, her brother, to expel her with contempt from his dominions, were regarded as the base calumnies of the Despencers. The facts that she came attended by her paramour, an outlawed traitor, and at the head of a band of foreign mercenaries, to raise the standard of revolt against her husband and sovereign, having abused her maternal influence over the mind of the youthful heir of England to draw him into a parricidal rebellion, excited no feeling of moral or religious reprobation in the nation. Every Plantagenet in England espoused her cause; but it is to be observed, that the king's younger brothers by the half blood, Thomas of Brotherton and the earl of Kent, were Isabella's first cousins, being the sons of her aunt Marguerite of France, and that Henry of Lancaster was her uncle. The connexion of these princes with the blood-royal of France had ever led them to make common cause with queen Isabella. By them and by their party she was always treated as if she were a person of more importance than the king her husband.

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[1] Speaking of this earl of Norfolk, Drayton, with his minute adherence to facts, says,—

"And being earl-marshal great upon the coast,
With bells and bonfires welcomes her on shore;
And by his office gathering up an host,
Showed the great spleen that he to Edward bore."

[2] These particulars are preserved in the Peerage for England, 3 vols. 1711, published by E. Sanger, Post-office; and Collins, at the Black-boy, Fleet-street.

When the alarming intelligence of the landing of the queen's armament reached the king, he was paralysed, and, instead of taking measures for defence, he immediately wrote pathetic letters to the pope and the king of France, entreating their succour or interference. He then issued a proclamation, proscribing the persons of all those who had taken arms against him, with the exception of queen Isabella, the prince her son, and his brother the earl of Kent. It is dated Sept. 28, 1326: in it he offers a thousand pounds for the head of the arch-traitor, Roger Mortimer. The queen, who had traversed England with great celerity, at the head of an increasing army, immediately published a reward of double that sum for the head of the younger Despencer, in her manifesto from Wallingford, wherein she set forth that her motives in coming are to deliver the kingdom from the misleaders of the king.[1]

The next attack on the king was from the pulpit at Oxford, where Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, having called the

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[1] Fœdera.

University together, in the presence of the queen, the prince of Wales, Roger Mortimer, and their followers, preached a sermon from the following text: "My head, my head acheth," (2 Kings iv. 19,) in which, after explaining the queen's motive for appearing in arms, he with unpriestly ferocity concluded with this observation: "When the head of a kingdom becometh sick and diseased, it must of necessity be taken off, without useless attempts to administer any other remedy."[1] The delivery of this murderous doctrine, in the presence of the wife and son of the devoted sovereign, ought to have filled every bosom with horror and indignation; but such is the blindness of party rage, that its only effect was to increase the madness of the people against their unhappy king. That misjudging prince, after committing the custody of the Tower and the care of his second son, John of Eltham, to the young lady Despencer, his niece, and the guardianship of the city of London to the faithful Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, left the metropolis, attended by the two Despencers, the earls of Arundel and Hereford, his chancellor, Baldock bishop of Norwich, and a few others of his adherents, and fled to Bristol, with the intent of taking refuge in Ireland.[2] The departure of the king was the signal for a general rising of the Londoners, in which the bishop of Exeter immediately fell a sacrifice to the fury of the partisans of the queen and Mortimer. The head of that honest prelate was cut off, and presented to the queen at Gloucester, as an acceptable offering. "Six weeks afterwards," says Thynne, "the queen, forgetting all discourtesies, did (like a woman desirous to show that his death happened without her liking, and also that she reverenced his calling) command his corpse to be removed from the place of its first dishonorable interment under a heap of rubbish, and caused it to be buried in his own cathedral."[3] The lady Despencer, intimidated by this murder, surrendered the Tower to the mob, who proclaimed prince John the custos of the city, and in the queen's name liberated the prisoners in all the gaols.

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[1] De la Moor.

[2] Walsingham. De la Moor.

[3] Thynne's MS. Lives of the Lord Treasurers; collection of sir T. Phillipps.

"The queen and all her company," says Froissart, "the lords of Hainault and their suite, took the shortest road for Bristol, and in every town through which they passed were entertained with every mark of distinction. Their forces augmented daily until they arrived at Bristol, which they besieged. The king and the younger Hugh Despencer shut themselves up in the castle: old sir Hugh and the earl of Arundel remained in the town, but these the citizens delivered up soon after to the queen, who entered Bristol, accompanied by sir John Hainault, with all her barons, knights, and squires. Sir Hugh Despencer, the elder, and the earl of Arundel, were surrendered to the queen, that she might do what she pleased with them. The children of the queen were also brought to her,—John of Eltham and her two daughters. As she had not seen them for a long time, this gave her great joy. The king and the younger Despencer, shut up in the castle, were much grieved at what passed, seeing the whole country turned to the queen's party. The queen then ordered old sir Hugh and the earl of Arundel to be brought before her son and the barons assembled, and told them 'that she should see that law and justice were executed on them, according to their deeds.' Sir Hugh replied, 'Ah! madam; God grant us an upright judge and a just sentence! and that if we cannot find it in this world, we may find it in another.'" He was instantly condemned to suffer a traitor's death, and although he was ninety years old, was hanged in his armour, just as he was taken from the queen's presence, within sight of the king and his son, who were in the castle. "Intimidated by this execution," continues Froissart, "they endeavoured to escape to the Welsh shore in a boat which they had behind the castle; but after tossing about some days, and striving in vain against the contrary winds, which drove them repeatedly back within a mile of the castle from whence they were trying to escape, sir Hugh Beaumont, observing the efforts of this unfortunate bark, rowed out with a strong force in his barge, to see who was in it. The king's exhausted boatmen were soon overtaken, and the consequence was, that the royal fugitive and his hapless favourite were brought back to Bristol, and delivered to the queen as her prisoners." According to other historians, Edward fled to Wales, and took refuge among the monks of Neath; but his retreat was betrayed by sir Thomas Blunt, the steward of his household.

The queen and all the army set out for London. Sir Thomas Wager, the marshal of the queen's army, caused sir Hugh Despencer to be fastened on the poorest and smallest horse he could find, clothed with a tabard such as he was accustomed to wear, that is, with his arms, and the arms of Clare of Gloucester in right of his wife, emblazoned on his surcoat, or dress of state. Thus was he led in derision, in the suite of the queen, through all the towns they passed: he was announced by trumpets and cymbals, by way of greater mockery, till they reached Hereford, where she and her followers were joyfully and respectfully received, and where the feast of All Saints was celebrated by them with great solemnity.

The unfortunate Hugh Despencer would eat no food from the moment he was taken prisoner, and becoming very faint, Isabella had him tried at Hereford, lest he should die before he reached London. Being nearly insensible when brought to trial, his diabolical persecutors had him crowned with nettles;[1] but he gave few signs of life. His miseries were ended by a death, accompanied with too many circumstances of horror and cruelty to be more than alluded to here. He was executed at Hereford, in the stronghold of the power of Mortimer: the queen was present at his execution.[2] The earl of Arundel and two gentlemen named Daniel and Micheldene, were beheaded previously at Hereford, to gratify the vindictive feelings of Mortimer, who cherished an especial animosity against them. Baldock, the chancellor, though protected by his priestly vocation, as bishop of Norwich, from the axe and the halter, derived little benefit from his clergy, since he was consigned to the tender mercies of Adam Orleton, through whose contrivance he was attacked by the London mob with such sanguinary fury, that he died of the injuries he received on his way to Newgate.[3]

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[1] Chronicle in Leland, written by sir W. Packington, treasurer to Edward the Black Prince.

[2] Michelet's Hist. of France.

[3] Walsingham. De la Moor.

Now the evil nature of Isabella of France blazed out in full view. Hitherto her beauty, her eloquence, and her complaints had won all hearts towards her cause; but the touchstone of prosperity showed her natural character. Much of the cruel and perfidious spirit which characterized the conduct of her father Philip le Bel, in his ruthless dealings with the knights-Templars, may be traced in her proceedings at this period. She was, however, the popular idol of the English just then; and, as long as the national delusion lasted, she could do no wrong. Flushed, but not satisfied with vengeance, Isabella set out for London, accompanied by her son, her doughty champion sir John of Hainault, and her paramour Mortimer, her baronial partisans, and her foreign troops; while a motley levy of volunteers, who had accumulated on the road, followed in an almost interminable concourse. As they approached the metropolis, great crowds poured forth to welcome them. The queen was hailed as the deliverer of the country: the citizens presented costly gifts to her, and also to some of her followers. We may suppose that Mortimer was not forgotten.[1]

Previously to her quitting Bristol, the queen summoned a parliament, in the king's name, to meet at Westminster, December the 15th, "in which Isabella, queen-consort, and Edward, son of the king, the guardian of the realm, and the lords, might treat together." This writ was tested by the prince, as guardian; but a new summons was issued for the meeting of parliament at the same place, on January 7th, to treat with the king himself, *if he were present*, or *else* with the queen-consort and the king's son, guardian of the realm. The summons was tested by the king himself, at Ledbury, December 3, 1326. The parliament met, the misdemeanours of the sovereign were canvassed, his deposition was decreed, and his eldest son was elected to his office, and immediately proclaimed king in Westminster-hall by the style and title of Edward III. When the decision of her own faction was made known to Isabella, she burst into a passion of weeping,[2] and these counterfeit tears so wrought upon the generous unsuspicious nature of her son, that he made a solemn vow not to accept the offered crown of England, unless it were his royal father's pleasure voluntarily to resign it to him.

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[1] Rolls of Parliament. Brady.

[2] Walsingham.

Isabella had overacted her part, and her party were a little disconcerted at the virtuous resolution of the princely boy, as they had never dreamed of making the consent of the king to his own deposition a preliminary to the inauguration of his successor; but they found nothing less would satisfy the young Edward as to the lawfulness of his title to the throne. The king had already been compelled to resign the great seal to the delegates of his queen and parliament, at Monmouth-castle. Adam Orleton, the traitor bishop of Hereford, was the person employed by the queen to demand it; and as the king quiescently resigned it to him, he was deputed, with twelve other commissioners, to require the fallen monarch to abdicate his royal dignity, by delivering up his crown, sceptre, and the rest of the regalia into their hands. The commissioners proceeded on their ungracious errand to Kenilworth-castle, where the king was kept as a state-prisoner, but with honourable treatment, by his noble captor, Henry of Lancaster. Orleton was the spokesman,[1] and vented the insatiable malice of his heart in a series of the bitterest insults against his fallen sovereign,[2] under the pretence of demonstrating the propriety of depriving him of a dignity of which he had proved himself unworthy. Edward listened to the mortifying detail of the errors of his life and government, with floods of tears;[3] and when Orleton enlarged on the favour shown him by the magnates of his kingdom, in choosing his son for his successor instead of conferring the crown on a stranger, he meekly assented, and withdrew to prepare himself for the resignation of the outward symbols of sovereignty.[4]

De la Moor, the faithful servant of Edward II., gives a pathetic account of the scene in the presence-chamber at Kenilworth-castle, where the commissioners, in the presence of Henry Plantagenet, earl of Leicester, the earl of Lancaster's

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De la Moor. Knighton.

[2] Walsingham. Rapin.

[3] De la Moor. Walsingham.

[4] Ibid.

eldest son, were drawn up in formal array by Orleton, to renounce their homage to king Edward, and to receive his personal abdication of the royal dignity. After a long pause the unfortunate prince came forth from an inner apartment, clad in mourning weeds, or, as the chronicler expresses it, "gowned in black," the late struggle of his soul being sufficiently denoted by the sadness of his features; but on entering the presence of his obdurate subjects, he sank down in a deep swoon, and lay stretched upon the earth as one dead. The earl of Leicester and the bishop of Winchester immediately flew to his assistance, and, raising him in their arms, with some tenderness supported him. After much trouble, they succeeded in restoring their unhappy master to a consciousness of his misery.[1] "As piteous and heavy as this sight was," continues the chronicler, "it failed to excite the compassion of any other of the queen's commissioners. Scarcely, indeed, had the king recovered from his indisposition before the relentless Orleton, regardless of the agony he had inflicted, proceeded to a repetition of his cruel insults."[2] The king gave way to a fresh paroxysm of weeping; and being much pressed for his decision, he at length replied, that "He was aware that for his many sins he was thus punished, and therefore he besought those present to have compassion upon him in his adversity;" adding, "that much as he grieved for having incurred the hatred of his people, he was glad that his eldest son was so gracious in their sight, and gave them thanks for choosing him to be their king."

The ceremony of abdication, in this instance, it seems, consisted chiefly in the king's surrender of the crown, sceptre, orb, and other ensigns of royalty, for the use of his son and successor. Sir William Trussell, the same judge who pronounced sentence of death on the Despencers, and other adherents of the king, and whose appearance among the commissioners of the queen and parliament had probably caused the king's swoon, pronounced the renunciation of homage.

The chief faults of Edward II. appear to have been errors of judgment and levity of deportment. He is accused of having made a party on the Thames in a returned fagot-barge, and of buying cabbages of the gardeners on the banks of the river, to make his soup,—a harmless frolic,[1] which might have increased the popularity of a greater sovereign. Edward was, however, too much addicted to the pleasures of the table, and is said to have given way to habits of intemperance. From an old French MS., we find that he paid Jack of St. Alban, his painter, for dancing on the table before him, and making him laugh excessively.[2] Another person he rewarded for diverting him by his droll fashion of tumbling off his horse. The worst charge of all is, that he was wont to play at chuck-farthing, or tossing up farthings for heads and tails; a very unkingly diversion, certainly, and sufficient to disgust the warlike peers who had been accustomed to rally round the victorious banner of the mighty father of this grown-up baby.

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[1] De la Moor.

[2] Ibid. Walsingham.

Adversity appears to have had a hallowing influence on the character of Edward II.; and the following touching lines, written by him in Latin during his captivity, sufficiently denote that he was learned, and possessed reflective powers and a poetic imagination:—

"On my devoted head
Her bitterest showers,
All from a wintry cloud,
Stern fortune pours.
View but her favourite,[3]
Sage and discerning,
Graced with fair comeliness,
Famed for his learning;
Should she withdraw her smiles,
Each grace she banishes,
Wisdom and wit are flown,
And beauty vanishes."[4]

As soon as the commissioners returned to London with the regalia, and signified the abdication of the late sovereign to the queen and the parliament, the prince of Wales was publicly proclaimed king on the 20th of January, 1327, and Walter archbishop of Canterbury preached a sermon in Westminster-abbey, preparatory to the coronation, taking for his text, not any verse from Scripture, but the words, *Vox populi vox Dei.* The queen judged it prudent to detain her sworn champion, sir John de Hainault, and as many of his stout Flemings as he could induce to remain in her service, till after the coronation of the young king, who had completed his fifteenth year in the preceding November. He received knighthood from the sword of his cousin, the earl of Lancaster, assisted by sir John Hainault, on this occasion.

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[1] De la Moor. Walsingham. Polydore Vergil.

[2] J. P. Andrews; Collections from the Chronicles.

[3] Supposed to mean Mortimer.

[4] These lines are translated by J. P. Andrews from the original Latin, preserved in alderman Fabyan's Chronicle.

"There was at this time," says Froissart, "a great number of countesses and noble ladies attendant on the queen Isabella. The queen gave leave to many of her household to return to their country-seats, except a few nobles whom she kept with her as her council. She expressly ordered them to come back at Christmas, to a great court which she proposed to hold. When Christmas came she held her court; it was very fully attended by all the nobles and prelates of the realm, as well as by the principal officers of the great cities and towns. The young king Edward, since so fortunate in arms, was crowned with the royal diadem in Westminster on Christmas-day, 1326." The most remarkable feature at this coronation was the hypocritical demeanour of the queen-mother Isabella, who, though she had been the principal cause of her husband's deposition, affected to weep during the whole of the ceremony.[1]

Sir John de Hainault and his followers were much feasted, and had many rich jewels given them at the coronation. He remained during these grand feasts, to the great satisfaction of the lords and ladies who were there, until Twelfth-day. Then the king, by the advice of the queen, gave him an annuity of four hundred marks, to be held by him in fee, payable in the city of Bruges; and to the countess of Garennes, and some other ladies who had accompanied the queen Isabella to England, king Edward III. gave many rich jewels, on their taking leave. With a view of increasing the unpopularity of her unhappy lord, Isabella wrote to the pope on the last day of February, 1327, requesting him to canonize the beheaded earl of Lancaster, her uncle, whose virtues she greatly extolled.[2]

The parliament, immediately after the coronation, appointed a council of regency for the guardianship of the youthful sovereign and the realm, consisting of twelve bishops and peers. Among these were the king's two uncles, Thomas of Brotherton, earl-marshal, and Edmund of Woodstock, earl of Kent, and the archbishops of Canterbury and York, &c. &c. The earl of Lancaster was appointed the president. The queen made no remonstrance against this arrangement; but, having military power in her own hands, she seized the government, and made Roger Mortimer (whom she had caused her son to create earl of March) her prime-minister, and Adam Orleton her principal counsellor.[1] This precious trio managed the affairs of the kingdom between them. Isabella, who had hitherto made profession of the most disinterested regard for the public good in all her actions, and had been hailed as a liberator and friend of the people, now threw off the mask, and, with the sanction of a parliament composed of her creatures, appropriated to herself two-thirds of the revenues of the crown. She also took occasion of an incursion of the Scots to recall the foreign troops under the command of her vowed champion, sir John of Hainault, to strengthen her authority, under pretence of assisting in the defence of the realm. The arrival of these mercenaries, however, was any thing but agreeable to the Londoners. "The queen," says Froissart, "held a great court on Trinity-Sunday, at the house of the Black Friars; but she and her son were lodged in the city, where each kept their lodgings separate,—the young king with his knights, and the queen with her ladies, whose numbers were very considerable. At this court the king had five hundred knights, and dubbed fifteen new ones. The queen gave her entertainment in the dormitory, where at least sixty ladies, whom she had invited to entertain sir John de Hainault and his suite, sat down to the table. There might be seen a numerous nobility, well served with plenty of strange dishes, so disguised that it could not be known what they were. There were also ladies most superbly dressed, who were expecting with impatience the hour of the ball, but they expected in vain. Soon after dinner the guests were suddenly alarmed by a furious fray, which commenced among the English archers and the grooms of the Hainault knights, who lodged with them in the suburbs. The Hainault knights, their masters, who were at the queen's banquet, hearing the bruit of the affray, rushed to their quarters. Those that could not enter them were exposed to great danger, for the archers, to the number of three thousand, shot both at masters and grooms." This fray effectually broke up Isabella's magnificent Sunday ball at Blackfriars.

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[1] Planche's Hist. of Coronations.

[2] Brady's Hist., p. 138, and Appendix, No. 64, 66. Rapin, 397.

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[1] Walsingham. De la Moor.

Meantime the deposed sovereign Edward II. continued to write from his prison the most passionate letters of entreaty to Isabella to be permitted to see her and their son. He was encouraged, perhaps, by the presents which (according to Walsingham) she occasionally sent him, of fine apparel, linen, and other trifling articles, accompanied by deceitful messages, expressing solicitude for his health and comforts, and lamenting that she was not permitted by the parliament to visit him;[1] nothing was, however, further from the heart of Isabella than feelings of tenderness or compassion for her hapless lord. The moment she learned that her uncle, Henry of Lancaster, had relented from his long-cherished animosity against his fallen sovereign, and was beginning to treat him with kindness and respect, she removed him from Kenilworth, and gave him into the charge of the brutal ruffians, sir John Maltravers and sir Thomas Gurney, who had hearts to plan and hands to execute any crime for which their agency might be required:

> "Such tools the Tempter never needs
> To do the savagest of deeds."

By this pair the royal victim was conducted, under a strong guard, first to Corfe-castle, and then to Bristol, where public sympathy operated so far in his favour, that a project was formed by the citizens for his deliverance. When this was discovered, the associate-traitors, Gurney and Maltravers, hurried him to Berkeley-castle, which was destined to be his last resting-place. On the road thither he was treated in the most barbarous manner by his unfeeling guards, who took fiend-like delight in augmenting his misery, by depriving him of sleep, compelling him to ride in thin clothing in the chilly April nights, and crowning him with hay, in mockery.[1]

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[1] Walsingham. De la Moor. Rapin. Speed.

According to De la Moor, the queen's mandate for the murder of her royal husband was conveyed in that memorable Latin distich from the subtle pen of Adam Orleton, the master-fiend of her cabinet; it is capable, by the alteration of a comma, of being read with two directly opposite meanings:—

“Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est.
Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est.”[2]

‘Edward to kill fear not, the deed is good.
Edward kill not, to fear the deed is good.’

Maurice de Berkeley, the lord of the castle, on the first arrival of the unhappy Edward, had treated him with so much courtesy and respect, that he was not only denied access to him, but deprived of all power in his own house. On the night of the 22nd of September, 1327, exactly a twelvemonth after the return of the queen to England, the murder of her unfortunate husband was perpetrated, with circumstances of the greatest horror. No outward marks of violence were perceptible on his person, when the body was exposed to public view, but the rigid and distorted lines of the face bore evidence of the agonies he had undergone, and it is reported that his cries had been heard at a considerable distance from the castle where this barbarous regicide was committed. "Many a one woke," adds the narrator, "and prayed to God for the harmless soul which that night was departing in torture."[1]

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[1] De la Moor adds, with great indignation, that they made him shave in the open field, bringing him cold muddy water in an old helmet, from a stagnant ditch, for that purpose. On which the unfortunate Edward passionately observed, in allusion to the bitter tears which overflowed his cheeks at this wanton cruelty, “In spite of you, I shall be shaved with warm water.” The excellence of Edward's constitution disappointing the systematic attempts of the queen's merciless agents, either to kill him with sorrow, or by broken rest, improper diet, and unwholesome air, they applied to Mortimer for fresh orders, it being well known that the whole body of the Friars-preachers were labouring, not only for his deliverance, but his restoration to royal power. The influence of this fraternity was calculated to awaken the sympathies of every village in England in favour of their deposed sovereign, whose patience and meekness under his afflictions and persecutions had already pleaded his cause in every heart not wholly dead to the tender impulses of compassion. It is supposed the sudden idea of shaving the king, originated in the fear of his being recognised by his partisans on his journey.

[2] A modern biographer of this prelate, with some degree of plausibility, endeavours to acquit him of this crime, on the grounds that the equivocal Latin verses, quoted by so many English authors, were composed more than a century prior to this era by an archbishop of Strimonium, with reference to Gertrude queen of Hungary, and also that Orleton was out of the kingdom at the time of Edward II.'s murder; but there is no reason why he should not have altered and adapted the lines for this purpose.

The traditions of that neighbourhood affirm that Edward II. had always expressed a wish that his mortal remains should repose in Gloucester cathedral, to which he had been a great benefactor; but Isabella, dreading the sympathy of the people being excited by the spectacle of their murdered sovereign's funeral, caused it to be privately intimated to all whom she suspected of loyal affection for his memory, that she would take deadly vengeance on any one who should presume to assist in removing his body from Berkeley. For some days the terror of the vindictive queen and her paramour, Mortimer, (who was certainly a very powerful magnate in that part of England,) so prevailed, that neither baron nor knight durst offer to bring the dead king to his burial. At last the abbot of Gloucester boldly entered the blood-stained halls of Berkeley with uplifted crosier, followed by his brethren, and throwing a pall, emblazoned with his own arms and those of the church, over the bier, bade his people, "In the name of God and St. Peter, take up their dead lord, and bear him to his burial in the church to which he had given so many pious gifts;" and so commenced the *Dirige*, no one venturing to interrupt, much less to withstand, the churchmen in performing the offices for the dead. Thus the courageous abbot triumphantly achieved his undertaking of conveying the body of his royal patron to Gloucester cathedral, where it was exposed to public view; after which he solemnized the obsequies, and raised a stately monument to his memory. The marvellousness of vulgar superstition embellishes the tale with the romantic addition, that as the abbot was denied horses at Berkeley-castle to draw the hearse, he summoned to his assistance four wild harts from the forest, and by them it was conveyed to the cathedral. This legend is generally related to account for the figures of these animals, with which the royal shrine is decorated; but as they were the cognizance of the abbot, their introduction is designed to perpetuate the memory of his covering the bier with his own pall, to place it under the protection of the church. Nor was this all our shrewd-witted abbot did; for by the easy test of miracles performed at king Edward's tomb, he effected a complete reaction of public opinion in regard to the character of that unfortunate prince, and invested him with the posthumous honours of martyrdom,—and thus the first blow was struck at the popularity of Isabella. This was fighting her with her own weapons, too, for she and her party had succeeded in raising the indignation of the people against the king, by setting up the earl of Lancaster for a saint and martyr, through the fraudulent evidence of the miracles which they pretended had been wrought at his tomb. The fame of king Edward's miracles threw those of his former adversary quite into the shade, and proved not only a powerful political device, but a source of wonderful prosperity to the monks of Gloucester; for so great was the influx of pilgrims who repaired from all parts of England to offer up gifts and prayers at the royal tomb, that for a season it became a more fashionable place of devotional resort than either the shrines of St. Thomas à-Becket or Our Lady of Walsingham.[1]

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[1] These were the words of De la Moor, the faithful and affectionate servant of Edward II., who did justice to his master's memory in his pathetic Latin chronicle. Edward III. afterwards raised a tomb with a fine effigy to his father's memory.

The public indignation, in that part of the country, was so greatly excited against the infamous instruments of the queen and Mortimer, that they were fain to make their escape beyond seas, to avoid the vengeance of the people.[2] Isabella endeavoured, by the marriage festivities of her son and his young queen, to dissipate the general gloom which the suspicious circumstances attending the death of her unhappy consort had occasioned. But so universal was the reaction of public opinion against her, that nothing but the despotism she had succeeded in establishing enabled her to keep possession of her usurped power.[1] The pacification with Scotland gave great offence to the public, because Isabella bartered, for twenty thousand pounds, the claims of the king of England over Scotland, and Mortimer appropriated the money to his own use. By the same treaty they restored the regalia of Scotland to their rightful owners: the English were indignant that in this regalia was comprised the famous 'black cross of St. Margaret,' which had been one of the crown-jewels of their Anglo-Saxon kings.[2] Still more were they enraged that, without sanction of parliament, the queen concluded a marriage between the princess Joanna, an infant of five years old, and David Bruce, the heir of Scotland, who was about two years older. Isabella accompanied her young daughter to Berwick, attended by Mortimer, and in their presence the royal children were married at that town, July 12, 1328.[3]

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[1] Gloucester cathedral is said to have been indebted for its north aisle and transept, and many other details of elaborate richness, to the sudden tide of wealth which was thus brought into the ecclesiastical treasury by this ingenious piece of loyal priestcraft. The quaint antique hostelry, where the pilgrims bound to the shrine of king Edward at Gloucester were lodged, is still in existence, and well worthy the attention of antiquarian travellers.

[2] Three years afterwards, Gurney was seized at Burgos by king Edward III.'s orders, and beheaded at sea on his voyage to England, in order to prevent, as it has been supposed, the disgrace which must have fallen on the queen-dowager, if her share in the murder of the late king, her husband, had been brought to light at his trial.

It was observed that the two brothers of the late king, Thomas of Brotherton and Edmund earl of Kent, and Isabella's own uncle, the earl of Lancaster, with some other magnates, had withdrawn themselves from the national council, in utter indignation at her late proceedings and of the insolence of her favourite Mortimer. They perceived, too late, that they had been made the tools of an artful, ambitious, and vindictive woman, who, under the pretence of reforming the abuses of her husband's government, had usurped the sovereign authority, and in one year committed more crimes than the late king and his unpopular ministers together had perpetrated during the twenty years of his reign.[4] Moreover, the barbarous persecutions and cruel death of their late sovereign made the princes recoil with horror at the idea of their having been, in some measure, accomplices in the guilt of the queen. Her favourite, Mortimer, even had the audacity, when parliament met at Salisbury, October 16, to enter the town at the head of an army; and, bursting into the room where the prelates were assembled, forbade them, under peril of life and limb, to oppose his interests. He then seized on the young king and queen, and carried them off to Winchester; and, far from paying any regard to the earl of Lancaster's complaints of the infringement of his office of guardian to the king's person, he marched to Leicester, and plundered his domain there.[1]

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[1] De la Moor. Walsingham.

[2] See the biography of Matilda of Scotland.

[3] The Scotch called their future queen, in derision, Joan Make-peace.

[4] Walsingham. De la Moor. Knighton.

Isabella's cruelty, her hypocrisy, and the unnatural manner in which she rendered the interests of the young king, her son, subservient to the aggrandizement of her ferocious paramour Mortimer, excited the indignation of all classes, and a strong party was organized, under the auspices of the Plantagenet princes, to deliver England from the tyranny of this modern Semiramis. The earl of Lancaster, who was by this time fully aware of the disposition of his vindictive kinswoman, perceived that he was intended for her next victim; on which he, with the brothers of the late king and their confederates, took up arms, and put forth a manifesto containing eight articles, all alarming to the guilty queen and Mortimer,—especially the first clause, which threatened inquiry into the unlawful augmentations of her dower, and the fifth, regarding the late king's death.[2] Aware of the impossibility of meeting such inquiries before parliament, Isabella urged the king, her son, to attack the malcontents, assuring him that the object of his uncle was to deprive him of the throne.[3]

The interference of the archbishop of Canterbury prevented another civil war, and through his exertions a hollow pacification was effected. It was not, however, in the nature of Isabella to forgive any offence that had ever been offered to her; and it is to be observed, that her enmity had hitherto always proved fatal to every person who had been so unfortunate as to incur her ill-will. With the wariness of a cat she now examined the characteristic qualities of the members of the royal family, whom she determined to attack separately, since she had found them too strong to engage collectively. She commenced with the earl of Kent, who had, ever since the death of the king his brother, suffered the greatest remorse for the part he had taken in the late revolution. Isabella, being aware of his state of mind, caused it to be insinuated to him that the late sovereign his brother was not dead, but a prisoner within the walls of Corfe-castle. A friar, whom the earl employed to inquire into the truth of this tale, on finding that every one in that neighbourhood confidently believed that the unfortunate Edward II. was living under very close restraint in the castle, endeavoured to obtain access to this mysterious captive: he was shown, at a distance, a person sitting at table, whose air and figure greatly resembled that of the deceased king, whom, indeed, he was meant to personate. The earl of Kent, anxious to make reparation to his royal brother for the injuries he had done him, hastened to Corfe-castle, and boldly demanded of the governor "to be conducted to the apartment of sir Edward of Caernarvon, his brother." The governor did not deny that king Edward was in the castle, but protested the impossibility of permitting any one to see him. The earl then prevailed on him to take charge of a letter for his illustrious prisoner. This letter was immediately conveyed to queen Isabella, who caused the earl to be arrested at Winchester, where the parliament was then assembled.[1] He was impeached of high treason before the peers. His own letter was the chief evidence produced against him, together with his confession, moreover, "that a certain Friar-preacher of London told him he had conjured up a spirit, who assured him that his brother Edward was still alive; also, that sir Ingram Barenger brought him a letter from the lord Zouche, requesting his assistance in the restoration of the late sovereign."[2] His arraignment took place on Sunday, March 13, 1329, (Isabella's sabbaths being no holidays,) and he was condemned to die on the morrow. "All that day," say the chroniclers, "the king was so beset by the queen his mother, and the earl of March, that it was impossible for him to make any efforts to preserve his uncle from the cruel fate to which he had been so unjustly doomed."[1] This murder, which was designed by Isabella as an intimidation to the princes of the blood-royal, had the effect of increasing the abhorrence in which she was now held throughout the kingdom. She further outraged public opinion by presenting the principal part of the estates of the princely victim to Mortimer's son, Geoffrey.[2]

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[1] Lingard.

[2] Knighton.

[3] Lancaster was compelled to ask pardon, to submit to an enormous fine, and to enter into recognisances not to do any evil or injury to the king, the two queens, or any of their household or council, whether great or small.—Lingard.

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[1] Walsingham.

[2] Public Acts.

The death of Charles le Bel without male issue having left Isabella the sole surviving child of Philip le Bel, her eldest son, Edward III., considered that he had the best claim to the sovereignty of France. The twelve peers of France decided otherwise, and gave, first the regency, and then (on the birth of the posthumous daughter of Charles le Bel) the throne, to Philip of Valois, the cousin of their late king. Edward was eager to assert his claim, as the nephew of that monarch, and the grandson of Philip le Bel; but his mother, deceived by overtures from France for a double marriage between her daughter Eleanor and the heir of Valois, and her second son and Philip's daughter, not only prevented him from asserting his own claims, but compelled him, sorely against his will, to acknowledge those of his rival, by performing homage for the provinces held of the French crown.

Edward returned from his last conference with king Philip at Amiens, out of humour with himself, and still more so with his mother. The evil odour of her reputation was rife in France, and had been a source of deep mortification to him. Matters, which had been carefully kept from his knowledge in his own court, reached him through various channels when once beyond the limits of the thraldom in which she had held him. The murder of his royal father, the infamy of Isabella's life with Mortimer, her cruelty, falsehood, and rapacity, her lawless usurpation of the sovereign authority, were represented to him by his faithful friends. It is probable, that the horror and indignation which revelations like these were calculated to produce in the mind of the youthful monarch towards his guilty mother, caused him to meet her with unwonted coldness, for she appears to have taken the alarm, and endeavoured to strengthen her cause by secretly soliciting the support of the most powerful members of her own party.

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[1] See the chronicler in Leland, vol. ii. p. 477, who deeply implicates Isabella in this misdeed. It inspired all people with horror. The executioner himself stole secretly away, and the earl of Kent waited on the scaffold at Winchester-castle-gate from noon till five in the afternoon, because no one could be induced to perform that office. At length a condemned felon in the Marshalsea obtained his pardon, on the condition of decapitating the unfortunate Plantagenet.

[2] After this execution, Mortimer augmented his own retinue considerably, and affected all the pomp and consequence of princely rank. He had a hundred and eighty knights in his establishment, and never moved without a prodigious train of followers. He held so many round tables, (a species of festival peculiar to his family, in imitation of king Arthur's chivalric institution,) and assumed so much importance in his demeanour, that even his son Geoffrey called him, when speaking of him, "the king of folly." In fact, he exceeded Gaveston in foppery and the Despencers in pride and cruelty.—Dugdale.

Among the unsorted documents in the Tower, a letter has lately been discovered, addressed by Isabella to the earl of Hereford, lord high-constable of England, and nephew to her murdered lord, the late king, entreating him to attend the parliament about to meet at Nottingham, to which he had already been summoned in the name of the king, her son. This letter is familiar and confidential, and it is worthy of observation, that she complains of "trouble of heart," and appears to dread an approaching crisis:—

"ISABELLA, QUEEN-DOWAGER, TO HER NEPHEW, THE EARL OF HEREFORD.[1]

"MOST DEAR AND BELOVED NEPHEW,

"We have well understood what you have sent us word by your letters, and as to our state we give you to know that we are even in *great trouble of heart;* but considering the condition we are in, we were in good health of body at the setting forth of this letter, which the Lord ever grant to you.

"Dearest nephew, we pray you that you will leave off all excuses, and come to the king our son in the best manner you can, and as he commands you more fully by his letters. For you well know, dearest nephew, if you come not, considering the necessity that now exists, it will be greatly talked of, and will be a great dishonour to you; wherefore make an effort to come at this time as hastily as you can, as you know, dearest nephew, that we shall ever be ready to counse you as well as we can, in all things that shall be to your honour and profit.

"Most dear and beloved nephew, our Lord have you in his keeping! Given at Nottingham, the 10th day of October."

Endorsed,—"*To come to the King.*"

A fortnight after the date of this letter, the parliament met at Nottingham. The insolent bearing of the queen-mother's paramour, Mortimer, at this period, is thus quaintly described by the chronicler from whom Stowe has taken his curious narrative of the events of one of the most dramatic passages in English history: "There was a parliament, where Roger Mortimer was in such glory and honour, that it was without all comparison: no man durst name him other than earl of March, and a greater rout of men waited at his heels than on the king's person. He would suffer the king to rise to him; and would walk with him equally, step by step, and cheek by cheek, never preferring the king, but would go foremost himself with his officers. He greatly rebuked the earl of Lancaster, cousin to the king, for that without his consent he appointed certain noblemen to lodgings in the town, asking, 'Who made him so bold, to take up his lodgings close to the queen?' With which words the constable, being greatly *feared*, [alarmed,] appointed lodgings for the earl of Lancaster a full mile out of the town, where was lodged John Bohun, the earl of Hereford, lord high-constable of England; by which means a great contention rose among the noblemen and the common people, who called Roger Mortimer 'the queen's *paragon* and the king's master, who destroys the king's blood, and usurps the regal majesty.'"

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[1] Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies, by M. A. E. Wood, vol. i. p. 64. (Unsorted Tower-letters: French.)

King Edward had designed to occupy Nottingham-castle himself with his train, but the queen-mother forestalled him, by establishing herself there beforehand, under the protection of Mortimer's followers, who constituted a strong military force. Every night she used the precaution of having the keys of the castle brought to her, and, for greater security, placed them under her pillow.[1] The quarter where Isabella had taken up her abode was the strongest portion of the castle, called 'the old tower,' built on the top of a rock, accessible only by a secret subterranean passage from the meadows lying below it, through which ran a little rivulet called the Lyne, almost under the castle-rock. At the foot of this rock is a spring called 'Mortimer's well,' and a cavernous passage, still known by the name of 'Mortimer's hole,' through which he nightly ascended to the chamber of the queen-mother,[2] who affected to pay a flimsy homage to public opinion, by sleeping in a part of the castle which had no apparent communication with his lodgings. Their nocturnal meetings were however, more than suspected; and one of the king's trusty friends, sir William Montague, by application to Robert de Holland, the seneschal of the castle, to whom all secret corners of the same were known, obtained a clue, whereby their royal master and his companions would be able to follow the same track. King Edward considered that it would be a favourable time to strike a decisive blow for the vindication of his honour, and the establishment of his lawful authority, by the arrest of his mother's favourite, when the barons of England, to whom he was a greater source of offence than either Gaveston or Despencer, were assembled for their duty in parliament. "On a certain night," pursues Stowe's authority, "the king and his friends were brought by torchlight through a secret way underground, beginning far from that castle, till they came even to the queen's chamber, which they by chance found open; they, being armed with naked swords in their hands, went forward, leaving the king armed without the chamber-door, lest his mother should espy him. They entered in, slew sir Hugh Turpington, who resisted them, and to John Neville they gave a deadly wound. From thence they went to the queen-mother, whom they found with the earl of March, just ready to go to bed; and, having seized the said earl, they led him into the hall, the queen following, crying out, '*Bel filz, ayez pitié de gentil Mortimer!*' for she knew her son was there, though she saw him not. She likewise entreated Montague and his people 'to do no harm to the person of Mortimer, because he was a worthy knight, her dear friend and well-beloved cousin.' No reply was made to her intercession, and Mortimer was hurried away, the castle locked on the queen, and all her effects sealed up. The next morning Roger Mortimer and his friends were led prisoners towards London. As soon as they appeared, the populace of Notting-

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[1] Walsingham. Knighton. Carte.

[2] The locality of the scene is very quaintly described by the celebrated Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, in her auto-biography, p. 235. "Behind Nottingham-castle," she says, "is a track called the park, which contains no deer, nor even a tree,

excepting one growing directly under the castle, which was a prodigy; for, from the root to the top, there was not one straight twig in it. The tradition went, that King Richard III. planted it with his own hands, and that the tree resembled him in its growth."

ham and the nobles of the king's party set up a tremendous shout, the earl of Lancaster who was at that time blind, joining in the outcry, and making violent gesticulations for joy. On his arrival in London, Mortimer was for a few hours committed to the Tower, previous to his summary execution."[1]

This great culprit was arraigned in the king's presence before the peers, and after the indictment which contained a list of his misdemeanours was read, by the king's command every one was asked, says Froissart, "by way of counsel, what sentence should be awarded. Judgment was soon given; for each had perfect knowledge of the facts, from good report and information. They replied to the king's question, that he ought to suffer the same death as sir Hugh Despencer the younger, which sentence had neither delay nor mercy. This was instantly carried into effect, without waiting to hear what the accused had to say in his own vindication." Mortimer was the first person executed at Tyburn, which was then known by the name of the Elms. His body hung on the gallows there two days and nights, by the especial order of the king; it was then taken down and buried in the Grey Friars' church, within Newgate, of which queen Isabella was a benefactress.[2] Sir Simon Burford and sir John Deverel, who were taken at the same time with Mortimer in the queen's ante-chamber at Nottingham-castle, were executed with him. They earnestly desired to disclose the particulars of the late king's murder, but were not permitted to do so, lest their disclosures should implicate the queen too deeply.

Isabella was spared the ignominy of a public trial through the intercession of the pope, John XXII., who wrote to the young king, exhorting him not to expose his mother's shame.[3] After this, Edward attributed all her crimes to the evil influence of Mortimer, as may be seen in the royal declaration to parliament of the reasons which induced him to inflict the punishment of death on that great state-criminal. In the ninth article of this posthumous arraignment it is set forth that,—"The said Roger falsely and maliciously sowed discord between the father of our lord the king and the queen his companion, making her believe that if she came near her husband he would poignard her, or murder her in some other manner. Wherefore, by this cause, and by other subtleties, the said queen remained absent from her said lord, to '*the great dishonour of the king and of the said queen his mother, and great damage, perhaps, of the whole nation hereafter, which God avert.*'"[1]

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[1] Stowe's Chronicle.

[2] Knighton. De la Moor. Walsingham. Stowe. There is a precept in the Fœdera, permitting the wife and son of Mortimer to bury his body at Wigmore; but, according to Weever, the transfer was not made till the next century.

[3] Raynold, iv. 413, quoted by Dr. Lingard, vol. iv. p. 14.

One of the first acts of the emancipated monarch, after the gallant achievement by which he had rendered himself master of his own realm, was to strip the queen-mother of the unconscionable dower to which she had helped herself, and to reduce her income to 1000*l.* a-year.[2] It was also judged expedient by his council to confine her to one of the royal fortresses at some distance from the metropolis, lest by her intriguing disposition she should excite fresh troubles in the realm. "The king soon after, by the advice of his council, ordered his mother to be confined in a goodly castle, and gave her plenty of ladies to wait upon her, as well as knights and squires of honour.[3] He made her a handsome allowance, to keep and maintain the state to which she had been accustomed,[4] but forbade her ever to go out or show herself abroad, except at certain times, and when any shows were exhibited in the court of the castle."[5]

Castle-Rising, in Norfolk, was the place where queen Isabella was destined to spend the long years of her widowhood. It was part of her own demesnes, having been lately surrendered to her by the widowed lady of the last baron of Montalt. This stately pile was built, in 1176, by William Albini, husband to queen Adelicia, on a bold eminence surrounded by a high bank and deep vallum, like Norwich-castle. The walls were three yards thick; the keep was a large square tower, encompassed with a deep ditch and bold rampart, on which was a strong wall with three towers. Enough remains to show that Castle-Rising must have been almost an impregnable fortress.[1] Froissart says "the queen passed her time there meekly;" by which our readers are to understand, that she neither devised plots nor treasons against the government of her illustrious son, Edward III., nor gave further cause for public scandal. To sir John de Molins was committed the office of steward of her household, an appointment which must have been peculiarly distasteful to the captive queen, since this knight was the first person who seized Mortimer in Nottingham-castle, and was rewarded, in consequence, with this post in her establishment.[2]

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[1] 4 Edward III., anno 1330; Par. Rolls, p. 53.

[2] Knighton. Walsingham.

[3] Froissart.

[4] In the year 1332, Edward declares that his mother has *simply* and *spontaneously* given into his hands all the castles and estates which formed her dower; in return, he has assigned his mother divers other lands and castles of the value of 2000*l.* per annum: these are chiefly in North Wales, and the castle of Haverford, with its island, mill, and appurtenance, in South Wales; the rest of the grants are mere annuities payable from various royal demesnes.—Caley's Fœdera, p. 835.

[5] We have here an allusion to the customs of those times when travelling shows were the only theatrical exhibition in use, and much encouraged by the magnates of the land. The courts of royal and baronial castles were built with galleries round them, for the convenience of the family witnessing these attractive spectacles: the principal hostels were built in a similar manner, for the same purpose.

More than one ancient historian hints that, during her long confinement, Isabella was afflicted with occasional fits of derangement.[3] It is asserted that these aberrations commenced in a violent access of madness, which seized her while the body of Mortimer hung on the gallows. Her agonies were so severe, that, among the common people, the report prevailed for some months that she died at the time the body was taken down. These traditions lead us to conclude that for many months the populace did not know what had become of her. Her retired life, unconnected with conventual vows, must have strengthened the reports of her derangement, which was attributed to the horrors of conscience. She was in her six-and-thirtieth year when her seclusion at Castle-Rising commenced. The king her son generally, when in England, visited her twice or thrice a-year,[1] and never permitted any one to name her in his presence otherwise than with the greatest respect. It is to be observed that Edward's council, in regard to the petitions of certain individuals for the recovery of money due to them during her government, are by him referred to the advice of queen Isabella. Her name is carefully guarded from all reproach in the rolls of parliament, which, nevertheless, abound in disputes relative to her regency. A petition from the poor lieges of the forest of Macclesfield to king Edward declares, that "Madame, his mother, holds the forest as her heritage; and yet the bailiff of Macclesfield kills her venison, and destroys her wood." Isabella is not named as queen, but only as madame the king's mother: the king replies, "Let this petition be shown to the queen, that her advice may be learned thereon."

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[1] It now belongs to the hon. Mrs. Greville Howard, one of the descendants of the great Albini, the original founder. The remains of this castle, so noted for its historical reminiscences, have been, by the fine taste of the hon. colonel Howard, partly restored: the principal staircase has been repaired, and two rooms rendered habitable. In the course of the excavations, a Saxon church has been disinterred in a perfect state of preservation. The keep of Castle-Rising is still used for courts-leet, which meet within the great hall.

[2] Peerage of England, vol. ii. p. 283.

[3] Sir Winston Churchill mentions this tradition as a fact; Moreri hints at it. These reports are somewhat strengthened by the extravagant salary paid to her family physician at Rising-Castle. In the Fœdera is a deed securing "100*l.* per annum to master Pontio de Courtrone, late physician to king Edward II., and now to the queen-mother, Isabella; the bailiffs of Norwich are enjoined to pay him 50*l.* at Easter and at Michaelmas, as long as he lives, for his great services to the queen-mother." The document is dated 1333.

During the two first years of Isabella's residence at Castle-Rising, her seclusion appears most rigorous; but, in 1332, from various notations, the fact may be gathered that her condition was ameliorated. That year king Edward declared,[2] "That, as his dearest mother had simply and spontaneously surrendered her dower into his hands, he has assigned her divers other castles and lands to the amount of 2000*l.*" The same year this dower was settled, she was permitted to make a pilgrimage to the Lady shrine of Walsingham, not far from her residence in Norfolk. This is evidenced from the ancient Latin records of the corporation of Lynn,[3] which is in the neighbourhood of Castle-Rising. There is an entry of 20*s.* for bread sent to Isabella, queen-dowager, when she came from Walsingham; also 4*l.* for a cask of wine, 3*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* for a piece of wax, and 2*l.* for barley; also 3*s.* for the carriage of these purchases. King Edward restored to his mother, two years afterwards, the revenues of Ponthieu and Montrieul, which were originally the gift of her murdered lord. The same year, 1334, her son John of Eltham died in the bloom of life, and her daughter Eleanora was married to the duke of Gueldres. The records of Lynn contain the following notice, dated 1334: "The queen Isabella sent her precept to the mayor to provide her eight carpenters, to make preparations for the king's visit." In 1337, Edward III. again made some stay at Castle-Rising with his mother, and Adam de Riffham, of Lynn, sent him a present of wine on this occasion. Once only have we evidence that Isabella visited the metropolis: this was in the twelfth year of her son's reign, when she is witness to the delivery of the great seal in its purse by king Edward to Robert de Burghersh, in the grand chamber of the bishop of Winchester's palace in Southwark.

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[1] Froissart.

[2] Caley's Fœdera, 835.

[3] We have been favoured with these extracts by the hon. Mrs. Greville Howard; they are of historical importance, since they set at rest all doubts regarding the fact of Isabella's residence at Castle-Rising.

Parliament granted to Edward III. an aid of 30,000 sacks of wool; and by a writ, dated Feb. 27, 1343, the barons of the Exchequer were forbidden to levy any part from the lands and manors of the queen-mother, "because it was unreasonable that a person exempt and not summoned to parliament should be burthened with aids granted by parliament."[1] The same year Isabella received another visit from the king her son: on this occasion the Lynn records note that 11*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.* was expended for meat sent to "our lady queen Isabella." There is an item of 4*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.* paid by the corporation for a present sent to the household of our lord the king at Thorn denes, at his first coming to Rising, and 3*d.* for a horse sent by a messenger to Rising. The corporation, also, is answerable for 12*d.* given to William of Lakenham, the falcon-bearer at Rising; 4*s.* 3*d.* given to the messengers and minstrels of queen Isabella; 2*s.* 8*d.* for wine sent to the queen's maid; and 12*d.*, a largess for the earl of Suffolk's minstrels. Barrelled sturgeon was a favourite food at the queen's table, and it was certainly very costly when compared with the price of other viands. The corporation of Lynn, the same year, sent gifts of a pipe of wine and a barrel of sturgeon, costing together 9*l.* 12*s.* 9*d.*, to their lady queen Isabella; and, moreover, paid John, the butcher, money for conveying the said gifts to Castle-Rising. They sent to her treasurer and seneschal gifts of wine that cost 40*d.*, and presented 12*s.* to John de Wyndsore and other men of the king's family when at Rising, besides 2*d.* given to a servant looking for strayed horses from the castle; likewise 40*d.* given to the steward of Rising, when he came to obtain horses for the use of king Edward. A barrel of sturgeon cost as much as 2*l.* 15*s.*: the men of Lynn note that they paid 11*l.* for four barrels sent at different times as gifts to the queen at Castle-Rising, and 20*s.* for two quarter-barrels of sturgeon sent by her servant Perote. The supply of herrings, as gifts from the men of Lynn, amounted to 6*l.*, and they sent her 103 quarters of wax, at a cost of 4*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.* In the eighteenth year of his reign, king Edward dates several letters to the pope from Castle-Rising.

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[1] New Fœdera, vol. ii. p. 835.

A curious plan for the annoyance of king Edward was devised in the year 1348 by the French monarch, who proposed to make the queen-dowager of France and Isabella the mediators of a peace. They were to meet between Calais and Boulogne; but Edward was too wise to fall into the snare of attracting public attention to the guilty and degraded mother from whom his claims to the throne of France were derived. Isabella was not suffered to take any part in the negotiation: the succeeding documents prove that the treaty was completed by the duke of Lancaster and the count of Eu.[1] King Edward granted, in the thirty-first year of his reign, safe-conduct to William de Leith to wait on queen Isabella at her castle of Rising, he coming from Scotland, probably with news from her daughter, queen Joanna, who was then very sick. This person was physician to the queen of Scotland.[2]

Isabella died at Castle-Rising, August 22nd, 1358, aged sixty-three. She chose the church of the Grey Friars, where the mangled remains of her paramour Mortimer had been buried eight-and-twenty years previously, for the place of her interment; and, carrying her characteristic hypocrisy even to the grave, she was buried with the heart of her murdered husband on her breast. King Edward issued a precept to the sheriffs of London and Middlesex, November 20th, to cleanse the streets from dirt and all impurities, and to gravel Bishopsgate street and Aldgate, against the coming of the body of his dearest mother, queen Isabella; and directs the officers of his exchequer to disburse 9*l.* for that purpose. Isabella was interred in the choir of the Grey Friars', within Newgate, where a fine alabaster tomb was erected to her memory. She had given 62*l.* towards the building of this church. It was usual for persons buried in the Grey Friars' to be wrapped in the garment of the order, as a security against the attacks of the foul fiend. Queen Isabella was buried in that garment, and few stood more in need of such protection. It is a traditional circumstance, that she assumed the conventual garb at Castle-Rising. Perhaps Isabella, in the decline of life, had been admitted into the third order of St. Francis, instituted about twenty years before her death for lay-penitents who were not bound by conventual vows. That she made some pretence to piety may be inferred from the following list of her relics, for which Edward III. gave a receipt "to his beloved chaplain Edmund de Rammersby on behalf of his mother, the first year of her imprisonment: Two crystal vases, containing minute bones, relics of the holy Innocents; one silver flask, containing relics of St. Sylvester; part of the side of St. Lawrence, enclosed in silver; and a joint of John the Baptist's little finger."[1]

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[1] Caley's Fœdera. Philip's letters are in French, Edward's replies are in Latin.

[2] Blomfield's Norfolk. Public Acts. Walsingham. Stowe's London. Pennant. The Fœdera implies "that William de Leith was employed to request queen Isabella to act as mediatrix with king Edward, regarding the ransom of David king of Scotland."

According to Blomfield, local tradition asserts that queen Isabella lies buried in Castle-Rising church, and that all the procession to the Grey Friars' in London was but an empty pageant. In confirmation of this assertion they point out a simple grey stone, with this inscription deeply cut,—

ISABELLA REGINA.

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[1] Caley's Fœdera, p. 825.

Antiquaries, however, are of opinion that this stone covers the grave of one of the officers or ladies who died in her service at Castle-Rising; but it is also possible that she might have bequeathed her heart to her parish church, and that this inscription may denote the spot where it was interred.

An effigy of Isabella is to be seen, in perfect preservation, among the statuettes which adorn the tomb of her son John of Eltham, at Westminster-abbey. The fashion which prevailed for about half a century, of surrounding tombs with effigies of the kindred of the deceased, has preserved the resemblances of two of our queens. It were vain to seek the portraits of Isabella and her aunt Marguerite elsewhere than on the monument of him, who was at the same time the younger brother of Edward III., son of queen Isabella, and great-nephew to Marguerite of France. Isabella's statuette we identify by means of the conventual veil she assumed, as a sign of her penitence, during her seclusion in Castle-Rising; likewise she stands at the left hand of the well-known effigy of her murdered lord Edward II., whose beautiful little statue is a miniature of that, the size of life, on his splendid monument in Gloucester cathedral. John of Eltham's tomb-statuettes are wonderful works of art; they are carved out of the purest and finest alabaster, although five centuries of London atmosphere have dyed them of the hue of jet. Some great artist has designed them, for the ease of the attitudes, the flow of the draperies, the individuality of the features, are beyond all praise. The side of the tomb opposite to St. Edward's chapel being protected by a strongly carved oaken screen, they are as perfect as when they issued from the hands of the sculptor. Fortunately, on this side are arranged the English relatives of prince John; on the other, which was occupied by his French ancestors, the work of destruction has been nearly completed by the depredators who formerly devastated the abbey. Isabella's cast of features, though pretty, is decidedly Moorish, a circumstance easily accounted for by her Navarrese descent. She greatly resembles her mother, the sovereign-queen of Navarre, whose fine statue still presides over the gothic gateway of the principal college at Paris, which was her munificent foundation.[1] Isabella has a small crown at the top of the conventual hood; her widow's costume is much more rigid than that of the virtuous widow of Edward I.,—her aunt Marguerite. Partaking of the forms of the convent-cowl and veil, she wears the widow's barb high on her chin: she holds a sceptre in her right hand. But little of her low forehead is visible; in the original her mouth has a laughing expression, strangely at variance with her garb of woe, and with the tragic deeds that marked her career.

Isabella's virtuous daughter, Joanna queen of Scotland, the faithful and devoted consort of the unfortunate David Bruce, survived her mother only a few days, and was interred in the church of the Grey Friars, within Newgate.[2] Some authors assert that on the same day London witnessed the solemn pageant of the entrance of the funeral procession of the two queens,—one from the eastern, and the other from the northern road; and that entering the church by opposite doors, the royal biers met at the high altar. After a separation of thirty years, the evil mother and the holy daughter were united in the same burial rite.[3]

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[1] Montfaucon's Monumens, &c., vol. iii., gives two distinct portraits of Isabella's mother. Any visitor of Paris may see her statue at l'Ecole Polytechnique.

[2] Speed. Stowe's Annals. On the site of Christ-Church school.

[3] Stowe's Annals. The Chronicles and the Fœdera are at variance on this head. Simon archbishop of Canterbury names queen Joanna among the serene ladies who graced the wedding of the Black Prince, in 1360.—Fœdera, vol. vii.

Philippa of Hainault.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT

QUEEN OF EDWARD III.

CHAPTER I.

Previous attachment of Edward III. and Philippa—His sojourn at her father's court—Her blooming beauty—Demanded in marriage—Philippa arrives in London—Reception—Philippa travels to York—Married there—Her dower—Coronation—Claim on her shoes, bed, and silver basins—Birth of her eldest son—Queen nourishes him—Her portraits—Tournament—Dangerous accident—King's fury—Queen's intercession—Philippa's woollen manufacturers—Scotch war—Queen besieged in Bamborough-castle—Birth of the princess-royal—Of the princess Joanna—Of William of Hatfield—Death of this prince—Death of the queen's father—Poverty of the king—Pawns queen's crown—Philippa's residence in Flanders—Birth of Prince Lionel—Queen's visit to Norwich—King's naval victory—Queen's fourth son—King Edward's challenge—Pacification by the Queen's mother—Extreme poverty of Edward and Philippa—Their secret departure from Ghent—Embark with their infant—Land at the Tower—King's anger—Countess of Salisbury—Order of the Garter—Philippa assists at the first chapter—Residence at Woodstock.

The happy union of the illustrious Philippa with her thrice-renowned lord had been previously cemented by mutual preference, manifested in the first sweet spring-time of existence, when prince Edward took refuge with his mother, queen Isabella, at the court of Hainault. "Count William of Hainault had at that time four daughters," says Froissart; "these were Margaret, Philippa, Joanna, and Isabel. The young prince, during his mother's residence in Hainault, paid more court and attention to Philippa than to any of the others, who also conversed with him more frequently, and sought his company oftener, than any of her sisters." This was in 1326, when Prince Edward was in his fifteenth year, and the lady Philippa a few months younger. She was tall in stature, and adorned with the brilliant complexion for which the women of her country are celebrated.

A poet of her time has commemorated "her roseate hue and beauty bright;" and it can well be imagined that, without any claims to regularity of features, her early bloom was beautiful. The youthful lovers, after residing together in the palace of the count of Hainault at Valenciennes for about a fortnight, were separated. Edward embarked, with his mother and John of Hainault, on the dangerous expedition of invading his unfortunate father's kingdom, while his beloved was left in a state of uncertainty whether the exigencies of the state and the caprice of relatives would ultimately permit to be joined the hands of those, whose hearts had already elected each other.

Although a decided affection subsisted between young Edward and Philippa, it was not considered in accordance with the royal etiquette of that era for the heir of England to acknowledge that he had disposed of his heart without the consent of the parliament and council. Queen Isabella undertook the arrangement of this affair, and soon led the public authorities to the decision that a daughter of the count of Hainault would be the most desirable alliance for her son; but even as late as the fifth of August, 1327, the particular daughter of that family was not pointed out in the document requesting the dispensation of the pope; the words are, "to marry a *daughter* of that nobleman, William count of Hainault, Holland, and Zealand, and lord of Friesland," but the name of Philippa is not once mentioned throughout the letter. Thus the lovers remained seven months after the coronation of Edward in a state of suspense.[1] The council at last gravely decided that Adam Orleton,[2] the notorious bishop of

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[1] The name of Philippa is not mentioned till the last instrument from Avignon was executed, dated Sept. 3, 1327.—Fœdera, vol. iv.

[2] Hist. Bishops of Winchester, vol. i.

Hereford, should visit the court of Hainault, and choose, among the daughters of the count, the young lady who seemed most worthy to be the queen of England. As the choice of the bishop and king fell on Philippa, the young king had certainly informed Adam Orleton, in confidence, which princess among the fair sisterhood was the elected lady of his heart. The proceedings of the bishop are thus narrated by our last rhyming chronicler, Hardyng:[1]—

"He sent forth then to Hainault, for a wife,
A bishop and other lords temporal.
Among them-*selfs* our lords, for high prudence,
Of the bishop asked counsel and sentence,
'Which daughter of the five should be our queen?'
Who counsell'd thus with sad avisement,[2]
'We will have her with fairest form, I wene.'
To which they all accorded with one mind,
And chose Philippe that was full feminine,
As the wise bishop did determine.
But then among them-*selfs* they laughed aye;
Those lords then said, 'Their bishop judged full sooth
The beauty of a lady.'"[3]

"Shortly after the young king Edward completed his sixteenth year," says Froissart, "his council sent a bishop, two knights-banneret, and two able clerks, to sir John of Hainault, to beg of him to assist the young king of England in his suit to one of his nieces, since the young king would love her more dearly than any other lady on his account. Sir John feasted and paid many honours to these messengers. He took them to Valenciennes, where his brother the count of

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[1] Hardyng was a Lincolnshire man, a chronicler and an antiquary, brought up in the family of the earl of Northumberland, so famous in the deposition of Richard II. In his youth he acted as secretary to his lord, and was present at the battle of Shrewsbury. He is, therefore, nearly a contemporary, and, as such, his authority is great. His age must have been extreme, as he lived through the whole of the reigns of the house of Lancaster; was pensioned by Henry VI. in 20*l.* per annum, and finally presented his complete history to Edward IV.: he must then have been more than ninety. He mentions five daughters of Hainault: the eldest, Sybella, who had been contracted to Edward III. in his infancy was dead at this time.

[2] Serious consideration.

[3] This passage, among many others, will prove that personal beauty was considered by our ancestors as a most desirable qualification in a queen-consort. For this reason, these biographies are compelled by truth to dwell on the personal advantages possessed by our queens. The queens of England, down to Katharine of Arragon, seem, with few exceptions, to have been the finest women of their time.

Hainault gave them such sumptuous entertainment as would be tiresome to relate. He most willingly complied with their requests, if the pope and holy church had no objection. Two of the knights and some able clerks were despatched to Avignon; for without the pope's dispensation it could not be done, on account of their near relationship, for their two mothers were cousins-german. As soon as they came to Avignon, the pope and college consented most benignantly. On their return to Valenciennes, immediate preparations were made for the dress and equipage of a lady who was considered worthy to be the queen of England."

The king, then at Nottingham, empowered the bishop of Lichfield and Coventry,[1] on the 8th of October, 1327, to conclude his marriage with the noble damsel, Philippa of Hainault. He likewise charges "his beloved Bartholomew de Burghersh, constable of Dover, to receive and welcome into his kingdom that noble person William count of Hainault, with the illustrious damsel Philippa, his daughter, and the familiars of the said count and damsel; and he charges all and singular his nobility and people of the counties through which the count, damsel, and familiars may pass, to do them honour, and give them needful aid."[2] It was necessary for the lady Philippa and her escort to travel across England to meet the royal bridegroom, who was then performing his warlike noviciate on the Scottish border, under the auspices of his mother and Mortimer, against the great Robert Bruce.

Philippa was married at Valenciennes by procuration, soon after the date of this instrument. She embarked for England at Wisant, landed at Dover with all her suite, and arrived in London December 23, 1327, with a retinue and display of magnificence in accordance with the great wealth of her country. She was escorted by her uncle, John of Hainault, and not by her father, as was expected. A solemn procession of the clergy introduced her into the city, and she was presented by the lord mayor and aldermen of London with a service of plate worth 300*l.*, as a marriage gift,—a benefaction prompted, most likely, by the gratitude of the citizens for a treaty of commerce established between England and the Low Countries in the preceding summer, when these nuptials were first publicly agitated. The king was still with his army in the north, York being his head-quarters; and though London was in an uproarious state of rejoicing at the arrival of the young queen, she set out immediately to meet her lord. But there were feastings and sumptuous entertainments in London for three weeks after her landing.

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[1] Fœdera, vol. iv. Adam Orleton, who began the negotiation, had not the honour of finishing the treaty. He had at this time fallen into disgrace with Isabella and Mortimer, for accepting the rich bishopric of Winchester without the consent of the crown, and pertinaciously refusing to pay a bribe high enough to satisfy the rapacity of the queen-mother. The astute priest considered she was too much in his power to need such consideration.—See preceding biography.

[2] Dated at Clipstowe. Fœdera, vol. iv.

Philippa passed New-year's day at the abbey of Peterborough. She was escorted on her northern journey by the cousin-german of the king, John Bohun, earl of Hereford and Essex, and lord high-constable. An alarming riot occurred at the abbey owing to the tyranny of Hereford, who, when Philippa was about to depart, seized by violence on a little child, Godfrey de la Marck, under the protection of the abbot of Peterborough, and, claiming him as the son of one of his vassals, carried him off in the royal *cortège.*[1] No other adventures of the queen's bridal progress are recorded: the dismal season and bad roads made it tedious. The royal marriage did not take place until January the 24th, 1327-8, when the hands of Edward and Philippa were united at York minster. The magnificence of the espousals was heightened by the grand entry of a hundred of the principal nobility of Scotland, who had arrived in order to conclude a lasting peace with England, cemented by the marriage of the king's little sister, Joanna. The parliament and royal council were likewise convened at York, and the flower of the English nobility, then in arms, were assembled round the young king and his bride. The royal pair kept Easter at York, and after the final peace with Scotland they returned southward from Lincoln to Northampton, and finally settled, in June, at the beautiful summer palace of Woodstock, which seems the principal abiding-place of Philippa while her young husband was yet under the tutelage of Mortimer and the queen-mother.

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[1] Bishop Patrick's Hist. of Peterborough, p. 41. This orphan's legitimacy was disputed by his sisters, and the abbot, deeming his life in danger, gave him sanctuary until the trial was decided. Edward III. made his cousin restore the child to his place of refuge; the cause of young Godfrey was gained, and the abbot married him to a neighbouring knight's daughter.

A dead silence is kept in all the public documents regarding the amount of Philippa's portion,—for reasons good, since the queen-mother had already spent it. As for the usual dower of the queens of England, the whole of its lands were possessed by the queen-mother; but by a deed, executed at Northampton,[1] May 5th, "the king," says the venerable father, Roger bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, "had promised that 15,000*l.* per annum of lands should be settled on her." Queenborough was part of the young queen's dower; the Saxon kings had a strong castle there called Kyngborough, on a rising ground commanding a fine view over the Thames. Edward III. pulled down the ruins, and began a palace for his queen, meant to facilitate their frequent visits to her native country: he changed the name of the place to Queenborough, in compliment to her. Philippa's palace in the Isle of Sheppey was not finished till near the close of her life. Nothing remains of it now, excepting a few crumbling walls just above the soil, some indications of the donjon, mount, and an old well.[2] Isabella provided so well for herself and her daughter-in-law, that she left her son, the sovereign of England, nearly penniless.

After assisting at the marriage of his niece, Sir John of Hainault returned to his native country, laden with jewels and rich presents. Few of the Hainaulters who had escorted her to England stayed with queen Philippa; but among those who remained was a youth, named sir Wantelet de Mauny,[3] whose office was to carve for her. The coronation of the young queen did not take place till more than two years after her marriage. The king, from his palace at Eltham, issued a summons, dated the 28th of February, 1330, "for his beloved and faithful Bartholomew de Burghersh to appear with his barons of the Cinque-ports, to do their customary duties at the coronation of his dearest queen, Philippa, which takes place, if God be propitious, the Sunday next to the feast of St. Peter, in the cathedral of Westminster."[1] It took place on that day with no particular splendour, for the rapacity of Isabella and Mortimer had absorbed all the funds provided to support the dignity of the crown. But the period of their sway drew near its close: the young lion of England had already manifested signs of disdain at the ignoble restraint in which he was held.

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[1] Fœdera, vol. iv.

[2] It was completely destroyed by Cromwell.

[3] Froissart. This attendant of queen Philippa is sir Walter Mauny, so celebrated as one of the first knights of the Garter.

Parliament was summoned that spring at Woodstock, whither Philippa and her royal lord had retired after the coronation. A singular document[2] is dated from thence the succeeding April, in which the king informs his treasurer, "that his faithful and beloved Robert de Vere, being earl of Oxford, was hereditary chamberlain to the queens of England; at all coronations the ancestors of the earl had officiated in the same capacity, and that in consequence he claimed the bed in which the queen had slept, her shoes, and three silver basins,—one in which she washed her head,[3] and two others in which she washed her hands. And the king desires that the earl may freely receive the basins and the shoes; but as for the bed, the treasurer is to pay the earl-chamberlain a hundred marks as a compensation for his claim thereon."

While the young king was yet under the dominion of his unworthy mother, his consort Philippa gave birth to her first-born, afterwards the celebrated hero Edward, surnamed the Black Prince. He first saw the light at the palace of Woodstock, June 15, 1330. The great beauty of this infant, his size, and the firm texture of his limbs, filled every one with admiration who saw him. Like that renowned queen-regent of France, Blanche of Castile, mother of St. Louis, Philippa chose to nourish her babe at her own bosom. It is well known that the portraits of the lovely young Philippa and her princely boy formed the favourite models for the Virgin and Child at that era.

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[1] Edward III. Patent Rolls, 1361.

[2] Fœdera, vol. iv. p. 426.

[3] 'Face' would be more likely, but the actual word is *capitis*.

In order to celebrate the birth of the heir of England, a grand tournament was proclaimed at London. Philippa and all the female nobility were invited to be present. Thirteen knights were engaged on each side, and the tournament was held in Cheapside, between Wood-street and Queen-street: the highway was covered with sand to prevent the horses' feet from slipping, and a grand temporary tower was erected, made of boarding, filled with seats for the accommodation of the queen and her ladies. But scarcely had this fair company entered the tower, when the scaffolding suddenly gave way, and all present fell to the ground with the queen. Though no one was injured, all were terribly frightened, and great confusion ensued. When the young king saw the peril of his wife, he flew into a tempest of rage, and vowed that the careless carpenters who had constructed the building should instantly be put to death. Whether he would thus far have stretched the prerogative of an English sovereign can never be known, for his angelic partner, scarcely recovered from the terror of her fall, threw herself on her knees before the incensed king, and so effectually pleaded for the pardon of the poor men, that Edward became pacified, and forgave them.

In the decline of the year 1330, Edward III. shook off the restraints imposed upon him by his unworthy mother and her ferocious paramour. He executed justice on the great criminal Mortimer in the summary and hasty way in which he was always inclined to act when under the impulse of passion, and at a distance from his queen. No one can wonder that he was impatient to destroy the murderer of his father and of his uncle. Still this eagerness to execute sudden vengeance under the influence of rage, whether justly or unjustly excited, is a trait in the character of this mighty sovereign which appears in his youth, and which it is necessary to point out in order to develope the beautiful and nearly perfect character of his queen.

No sooner were the reins of government in the hands of the young king, than he vigorously exerted himself for the reformation of the abuses for which the administration of Mortimer was infamous: many excellent laws were made, and others revived, to the great satisfaction of the English people. But, above all things, the king had the wisdom to provide a profitable occupation for the active energies of his people. "Blessed be the memory of king Edward III. and Philippa of Hainault, his queen, who first invented clothes," says a monastic chronicler. Start not, gentle reader; the English wore clothes before the time of this excellent queen. The grateful monk, by this invocation, merely means to imply that, by her advice, the English first manufactured *cloth*.[1] Philippa, young as she was, well remembered the sources of prosperity which enriched her own country. She established a manufacturing colony at Norwich in the year 1335; but the first steps towards this good work were commenced so early as the 3rd of July, 1331, within a few months of the assumption of power by the youthful king. A letter so dated, from Lincoln, is addressed to John Kempe of Flanders, cloth-weaver in wool, in which he is informed, "That if he will come to England with the servants and apprentices of his mystery, and with his goods and chattels, and with any dyers and fullers who may be inclined willingly to accompany him beyond seas, and exercise their mysteries in the kingdom of England, they shall have letters of protection, and assistance in their settlement."[2]

Philippa occasionally visited Kempe and the rest of her colony in Norwich. Nor did she disdain to blend all the magnificence of chivalry with her patronage of the productive arts. Like a beneficent queen of the hive, she cherished and protected the working bees. At a period of her life, which in common characters is considered girlhood, she had enriched one of the cities of her realm by her statistic wisdom. There was wisdom likewise in the grand tournaments she held at Norwich, which might be considered as exhibitions showing the citizens how well, in time of need, they could be protected by a gallant nobility. These festivals displayed the defensive class and the productive class in admirable union and beneficial intercourse, while the example of the queen promoted mutual respect between them. Edward III. did not often take part in these visits to Norwich, which were generally paid by the queen while her husband spent some days with his guilty and miserable mother at Castle-Rising, in Norfolk;[1] a strong proof that he did not consider her a fit companion for Philippa. The house in which his queen usually sojourned was long pointed out by the grateful inhabitants of Norwich: its site is not forgotten at the present day.

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[1] A more coherent notice of this great benefit to England is given by Fuller, who defines the difference between a pastoral and a manufacturing land in his usual impressive though quaint style. "The king, having married Philippa the daughter of the earl of Hainault, began now to grow sensible of the great gain the Netherlands gat by our English wool, in memory whereof the duke of Burgundy, a century after, instituted the order of the Golden Fleece, wherein indeed the fleece was ours, but the gold theirs, so vast was their emolument by the trade of clothing. Our king therefore resolved, if possible, to reduce the trade to his own countrymen, who as yet were ignorant, as knowing no more what to do with their wool than the sheep that bore it."

[2] Fœdera. Probably the name of John Kempe is derived from comb, (that instrument being used in his employment,) and means 'John of the Comb,' as the old English of the verb 'to comb' is *to kempe*. Kempe was the patriarch of the Norwich woollen manufactures.

As the most interesting comment on the lasting benefits conferred by the illustrious consort of the third Edward on Norwich, when she assisted its inhabitants to compete with her countrymen in the manufactures from which she knew the wealth and importance of those princely merchants were derived, we take leave to subjoin the testimony of a gentleman[2] who contributes in no slight degree to the prosperity of the metropolis of our eastern counties, and whose school of design has carried the fine arts in wool and silk to a degree of perfection which no foreign loom can surpass. The dearly purchased laurels of Cressy and Poictiers have faded to the mere abstract memory of the military prowess of the victorious

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[1] See the preceding biography.

[2] The following letter from Mr. Blakeley, in answer to our inquiries regarding the building called in Norwich 'queen Philippa's house,' will justify, in the most practical manner, the praises we have bestowed on that queen, and afford information respecting it. "The citizens of Norwich are especially indebted to the good queen Philippa for her condescension in introducing and promoting manufactures, which for five centuries have furnished wealth and employment to a large portion of its inhabitants. The garden walls of the house stated by local tradition to have been occupied by the queen during her occasional visits to Norwich bear the marks of great age, but the house is certainly of more modern date." We think queen Philippa would be astonished if it were possible for her to see the exquisite texture, colours, and patterns of some of the Norwich shawls and dresses.

Edward and his son, regarding which no national benefit remains; but the fruits of Philippa's statistic practical wisdom continue to provide sources of wealth and national prosperity for generations yet unborn. It is likely that the establishment of the Flemish artists in England had some connexion with the visit that Jeanne of Valois, countess of Hainault, paid to her royal daughter in the autumn of 1331. The mother of Philippa was a wise and good woman, who loved peace and promoted the peaceful arts. During her sojourn in England she further strengthened the beneficial alliance between England and the Low Countries, by negotiating a marriage between the king's sister, Eleanora, and the duke of Gueldres, which was soon after celebrated.

Edward III. commenced a furious war on Scotland in 1333. His faithful queen followed his campaign, but while the king laid siege to Berwick, Philippa was in some danger at Bamborough-castle, where she resided that summer; for Douglas, the valiant guardian of his young king, turned the tables on the English invader, and made a forced march, to lay fierce siege to Bamborough,[1] hoping that Edward, alarmed at the danger of his queen, would relinquish Berwick and fly to her assistance; but Edward knew too well the strength of "king Ina's castle broad and high," and the firm mind of his Philippa, to swerve from his designs on Berwick.

Yet the temper of Edward was certainly aggravated into ferocity by the attempt to capture his queen, and he was led by sudden passion into the cruel murder of the two young Seatons. These unfortunate youths were the sons of the governor of Berwick, either given by him as hostages to Edward III., for the performance of certain terms of surrender, or, what was still worse, were prisoners put to death because their father would not surrender his trust. Either way, the act was atrocious. Perhaps it would have been prevented if the just and gracious Philippa had been by the side of her incensed lord; but Philippa was closely besieged in Bamborough, and her danger exasperated her husband into an act really worse than any performed by his stern grandsire,

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[1] Guthrie, folio Hist.

Edward I. The king knew that the Douglas was no trifler in any work he took in hand; he therefore resolved, by a desperate blow, to take Berwick, and march to relieve his queen from the attacks of the Scottish regent. He certainly gained Berwick from the stunned and paralysed father, but by the murder of the hapless youths he for ever stained his chivalric name. Douglas and Edward joined battle not far from Berwick soon after, and the Scots were overpowered at the disastrous battle of Halidon-Hill. Edward, with his queen, afterwards triumphantly entered Berwick, which has ever since remained annexed to the English crown.[1]

Edward and Philippa were in England during the winter of 1334. At the palace of Woodstock, on February the 5th, the queen brought into the world Elizabeth[2] (likewise called Isabella), the princess-royal. The queen undertook another campaign in the succeeding spring. That year her father sent king Edward a present of a rich helmet, made of gold and set with precious stones, with a remonstrance against wasting his strength in Scotland, where there was no plunder to be got, when the same expense would prosecute his claims on France. The queen this winter became the mother of a second princess, named Joanna. Philippa followed her lord to a third northern campaign. Her second son, William of Hatfield, was born in a village in Yorkshire, in the winter of 1336: this infant lived but a few weeks.[3] In the absence of Edward, the Scotch war was prosecuted by his only brother, John earl of Cornwall, with great cruelty; this young prince died at Perth, October the 5th, of a wound which he received in his ferocious attack on Lesmahago.[1]

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[1] Edward Baliol invaded Scotland with the English army, having first sent a civil message to young king David, offering to secure to him the family estates of the Bruce if he would surrender to him his kingdom and his wife, the young sister of king Edward. To this modest request the Scotch council (for the gallant Douglas lost his life at Halidon) replied by sending their young king and queen for safety to France, and preparing to defend their kingdom to the last gasp. Some authors declare that, after this conquest, Edward kept his Christmas at Roxburgh with his queen, but his government acts are dated in January at Wallingford.—Guthrie.

[2] The names of Isabella and Elizabeth were synonymous in the middle ages, to the confusion of history and genealogy.

[3] The accounts of the funeral expenses of this infant, who was buried in York cathedral, are curious features in the wardrobe-book of his father:—"1336. Paid for different masses about the body of lord William, son to the king, deceased; likewise for the purchase of three hundred and ninety-three pounds of wax, burnt round the prince's corpse at Hatfield, Pontefract, and York, where he was buried, and for three cloths of gold, diapered, to be placed over the said corpse and tomb; also for a hood for the face, and for webs, linen, and hearses, March 3rd,

While Philippa resided in the north of England, a circumstance occurred which is an amusing instance of monastic etiquette. King Edward had returned from Scotland, and advanced as far as Durham, where he established his lodging in St. Cuthbert's priory, near the castle. The queen travelled from York to meet and welcome him. She supped in the priory, and, thinking it was no offence, retired to pass the night in her husband's apartment. Scarcely had she undressed, when the affrighted monks came to the door, and pathetically remonstrated against the infringement of the rules of their order, intimating "that their holy patron St. Cuthbert, who during his life very sedulously eschewed the company of the fair sex, would be direfully offended if one of them slept beneath the roof of his convent, however high her rank might be." The pious Philippa, distressed at the idea of unwittingly offending St. Cuthbert, immediately rose from the bed in haste, fled in her night-dress to the castle, which was fortunately close by, and passed the night there by herself.[2]

The gout and other maladies put an end to the existence of count William of Hainault, soon after he had formed a league against France with king Edward, and with the wealthy father of his queen, Edward lost the liberal supplies with

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ninth year of Edward III., 42*l.* 11*s.* 1½*d.*"—"Paid for alms given by the king for the soul of his son William, divided between Hatfield and York, masses at Pontefract and York, and for widows watching round the said corpse, and burial service, 99*l.* 3*s.* 5½*d.*"

[1] Boethius affirms that Edward III., enraged at the cruelty of his brother, for burning the church of Lesmahago with a thousand Scotch people therein, drew his sword and slew the young prince before the high altar of the church at Perth. So little is known of this prince that the anecdote is worth recording, though the story of the deserved punishment of John is false, for Edward was not at Perth or in Scotland at that time.

[2] History of the Cathedral of Durham. The priory is at present the residence of the dean. It seems that an especial licence from the pope was needful to permit ladies, even were they queens, to dwell in a monastery. In the Bodleian there is a licence, with the leaden bull appendant, of pope Innocent IV., giving permission to Eleanor of Provence, queen of Henry III., to lodge in Cistertian convents of men: date, 1250

which he carried on his warfare. The English people chose always to be at war, but they expected their monarchs to find the cost out of their private revenues and feudal dues, which were certainly not sufficient for the purpose. Edward was reduced to extreme poverty, even in the commencement of his long war, and obliged to pawn his queen's crown at Cologne for 2,500*l.*, in the year 1339. Soon after the English people submitted, not to a tax *on* wool, but a tax *of* wool, and subscribed 30,000 packs of that commodity,[1] which, being sent down the Rhine to Cologne, redeemed Philippa's best crown from thraldom. During the whole of this reign the crown jewels were seldom out of pawn, notwithstanding the wealth that the infant manufacture of cloth was already drawing to the coasts of England. The prosperity that the queen's colony of Flemish artists had brought to Norwich had been felt so early as 1335, when Philippa paid that city a visit during her husband's progress to Castle-Rising. She was received by the grateful citizens with all the honours due to a public benefactress. Her memory is yet revered in that city, which may be truly called the English Ghent.

As vicar of the empire, and head of the confederated league of Germany, Edward III. had his head-quarters, during several of the Flemish campaigns, at Antwerp and Ghent, where his queen kept her court. At Antwerp the third son of Philippa and Edward III. was born, November 29th, 1338. This prince, born in the Low Countries of a Flemish mother, showed, as he grew up, all the characteristics of the Flemish race.[2] In due time, prince Lionel grew to be nearly seven feet in height, and being athletic in proportion, was a champion of whom any country might be proud. The queen returned with this infant Hercules to England in the autumn of 1339, and in the ensuing year king Edward paid a long visit to his unhappy mother in Norfolk, while queen Philippa went to Norwich to visit her woollen manufactories. She found a vast number of Norwich people who, having been apprentices of Kempe and his followers, were establishing themselves in the profitable trades of weaving and dyeing. She was received with great joy, and favoured the citizens with her presence from February to Easter.[1] At the festivities of that season her royal lord held a grand tournament at Norwich, where he tilted in person.

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[1] Fœdera. Guthrie. Carte. Blomfield's Norwich.

[2] In speaking of Philippa as Flemish, *race* is alluded to, rather than the narrow boundaries of the provinces of the Low Countries. In regard to actual birth-place, she was not a native of Flanders, but all the inhabitants of Low Germany present the characteristics of the Flemish people.

In the spring of the same year Philippa again sailed for the opposite coast, and established her court at Ghent. King Edward, in the mean time, cruised between England and Holland, where he had a fleet of upwards of three hundred ships. Philippa gave birth to her fourth son at Ghent, on Midsummer-day, 1340, at the very time that her warlike lord was fighting his great naval battle off Blankenburg. Next day the king landed at Sluys, impatient to embrace his queen and her infant, and bring Philippa tidings of the greatest naval victory the English at that time had ever gained over France. Philippa's boy was John of Gaunt, afterwards so renowned as duke of Lancaster.

The interference of the mother of Philippa about this time occasioned a temporary cessation of hostilities between France and England.[2] This princess, just as the belligerents were about to engage before Tournay, went to her son-in-law, and then to her brother, king Philip, and kneeling before them, implored them to make peace, and stop the effusion of Christian blood.[3] The pacification thus effected by the mother of queen Philippa for awhile put a stop to this kindred warfare. It was indeed time, for both the mighty

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[1] Hardyng.

[2] Froissart. Jeanne of Valois had retired into a convent after the death of her husband, the count of Hainault. This retreat was fired by the troops of her brother, king Philip, in this war.

[3] The relationship between Edward's queen and the competitor for the throne of France was near; she was both his niece and name-child, and the veneration and love which her mother bore to king Philip were excessive. The motives that prompted the mother of Philippa to interfere in this extraordinary manner between armies ready to engage, are perfectly consistent with the spirit of the middle ages. Her kinsman, king Robert of Sicily, a royal astrologer, had cast the nativities of Philip and Edward, and declared that he foresaw the discomfiture of the king of France, if ever he fought against his rival. The letters of king Robert, alarming the sisterly fears of the countess Jeanne, induced her interference. At Tournay, Edward was endeavouring to provoke Philip into a per

Edward and his faithful queen were literally in a state of bankruptcy. She had given up her crown, and all the jewels she possessed, which her royal lord had pawned to the Flemish merchants; but his wants were still so great, that to raise a further sum he likewise pawned the person of his valiant kinsman, the earl of Derby,[1] who actually gave himself up to personal restraint, while Edward stole away with his queen, and the child she nourished, to Zealand. Here he embarked with Philippa and the infant John of Gaunt, attended by a few servants. The ship was small, the weather stormy, and the royal passengers were in frequent danger of losing their lives: however, at midnight, December 2, 1340, they landed safely on Tower-wharf. Here the king found that three nurses, and the rest of the royal children, constituted the sole garrison of his regal fortress of the Tower: the careless constable, Nicholas de la Beche, had decamped that evening to visit a lady-love in the city, and his warders and soldiers, following so good an example, had actually left the Tower to take care of itself.[2] The great Edward, who was not in the mildest of tempers, owing to the untoward state of his finances, took possession of the fortress of his capital in a towering rage. As his return was wholly unexpected, the

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sonal combat. This excellent method of determining a succession-war Philip declined, because the cartel was not directed to the king of France. Upon this, the whole English camp cried out on the cowardice of Philip, and a poet belonging to Edward, possessing more loyalty than Latin, wrote the following couplet,—

"Si valeas, venias, Valois! depelle timorem
Non lateas; pateas; moveas. Ostende vigorem."

Which may be rendered,

"Valois, be valiant! vile fear can't avail thee;
Hide not, avoid not, let not vigour fail thee.'

Edward, who had himself sent a rhyming declaration of war to Philip, swore "these were valiant verses," and caused them to be fastened to an arrow, and shot into Philip's encampment.

[1] Carte. Guthrie. Caley's Fœdera. He remained in prison, being detained by Matthew Concanen and partners, merchants of the firm of the Leopard. Edward obtained supplies of his parliament next year by declaring "that if he was not enabled to redeem his honour and his cousin the earl of Derby, he would go to Flanders, and surrender his royal person to his creditors." In answer to this appeal, the commons granted the fleece of the ninth sheep and the ninth lamb throughout England: coin seemed to be as scarce with the subjects as with their royal master and mistress.

[2] Froissart, and several chroniclers.

consternation of constable de la Beche may be supposed, when he had concluded his city visit. It was well for the careless castellan that the gentle Philippa was by the side of her incensed lord at that juncture.

About this time, the heart of the mighty Edward swerved for awhile from its fidelity to Philippa, and had not the royal hero been enamoured of a lady of exemplary virtue, the peace of the queen might have been for ever destroyed. Sir William Montacute had been rewarded for the good service he did the king in the beginning of his reign, by the title of the earl of Salisbury. He had married the fair Katherine de Granson,[1] and received the castellanship of Wark-castle, whither he had taken his countess, who lived in retirement away from the court. In the mean time Salisbury had been captured in the French war. His castle in the north, which was defended by his countess and his nephew, was besieged in the second Scottish war by king David. When in great danger, young Montacute, by a bold personal adventure, carried the news of the distress of the countess to king Edward, who was encamped near Berwick. At the approach of Edward, the king of Scots raised the siege of Wark. The royal hero's interview with Katherine the Fair follows, in the words of Froissart:—"The moment the countess heard of the king's approach, she ordered all the gates to be thrown open, and went to meet him most richly dressed, insomuch that no one could look at her but with wonder and admiration at her noble deportment, great beauty, and affability of behaviour. When she came near king Edward, she made her obeisance to the ground, and gave him thanks for coming to her assistance; and then conducted him into the castle, to entertain and honour him, as she was very capable of doing. Every one was delighted with her; but the king could not take his eyes off from her, so that a *spark of fine love* struck upon his heart, which lasted a long time, for he did not believe that the whole world produced any other lady so worthy of being beloved. Thus they entered the castle, hand in hand. The countess led him first to the hall, and then to the best chamber, which was very richly furnished, as belonging to so fine a lady. King Edward kept his eyes so fixed upon the countess, that the gentle dame was quite abashed. After he had sufficiently examined his apartment, he retired to a window, and, leaning on it, fell into a profound reverie.

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[1] In Milles' Catalogue of Honour, the parentage of the countess of Salisbury is clearly traced. She was the daughter of William de Granson, a Burgundian knight of imperial lineage, a favourite of Edmund earl of Lancaster, who prevailed on Sibyl, heiress of lord Tregose of Wiltshire, to marry his friend. Granson possessed nothing in the world but a handsome person and a very doubtful pedigree, derived from the emperors of Constantinople. Katherine the Fair was the only child of this couple, and was endowed richly with her mother's wealth and her father's beauty She bestowed both on the brave earl of Salisbury. Dugdale confirms this account by quoting charters, in which he calls the countess Katherine de Grandison; of this name, Grason, or Granson, is an evident abbreviation.

"The countess left him to order dinner to be made ready, and the tables set, and the hall ornamented and set out; likewise to welcome the knights and lords who accompanied the king. When she had given all the orders to her servants she thought needful, she returned with a cheerful countenance to king Edward, and said, 'Dear sir, what are you musing on? Such meditation is not proper for you, saving your grace. You ought rather to be in high spirits, having freed England from her enemy without loss of blood.' The king replied, 'Oh, dear lady! you must know that, since I have been in this castle, some thoughts have oppressed my mind that I was not before aware of; so that it behoves me to reflect. Being uncertain what may be the event, I cannot withdraw my attention.'—'Dear sir,' answered the lady, 'you ought to be of good cheer, and feast with your friends, to give them more pleasure, and leave off pondering; for God has been very bountiful to you in your undertakings, so that you are the most feared and renowned prince in Christendom. If the king of Scotland have vexed you by the mischiefs he hath done in your kingdom, you will speedily be able to make reprisals in his dominions. Therefore come, if it please you, into the hall to your knights, for dinner will soon be served.'—'Oh, sweet lady!' said king Edward, 'there be other things which touch my heart, and lie heavy there, than what you talk of. For, in good truth, your beauteous mien and the perfections of your face and behaviour have wholly overcome me, and so deeply impress my heart, that my happiness wholly depends on meeting a return to my flame, which no denial from you can ever extinguish.'—'Oh! my dread lord,' replied the countess, 'do not amuse yourself by laughing at me with trying to tempt me, for I cannot believe you are in earnest as to what you have just said. Is it likely that so noble and gallant a prince as you are would ever think of dishonouring either me or my husband, a valiant knight, who has served you so faithfully, and who now lies in a doleful prison on your account? Certainly, sir, this would not redound to your glory; nor would you be the better for it, if you could have your wayward will.'

"The virtuous lady then quitted the king, who was astonished at her words. She went into the hall to hasten dinner; afterwards she approached the king's chamber, attended by all the knights, and said to him, 'My lord king, your knights are all waiting for you, to wash their hands; for they, as well as yourself, have fasted too long.' King Edward left his apartment and came to the hall, where, after he had washed his hands, he seated himself with his knights at the dinner, as did the lady also; but the king ate very little, and was the whole time pensive, casting his eyes, whenever he had the opportunity, on the countess. Such behaviour surprised his friends; for they were not accustomed to it, never having seen the like before in their king. They supposed it was his chagrin at the departure of the Scots without a battle. The king remained at the castle the whole day, without knowing what to do with himself. Thus did he pass that day and a sleepless night, debating the matter within his own heart. At daybreak he rose, drew out his whole army, raised his camp, and made ready to follow the Scots. Upon taking leave of the countess, he said, 'My dear lady, God preserve you safe till I return! and I pray that you will think well of what I have said, and have the goodness to give me a different answer.'—'My gracious liege,' replied the countess, 'God of his infinite goodness preserve you, and drive from your noble heart such villanous thoughts; for I am, and ever shall be, ready to serve you, but only in what is consistent with my honour and with yours.' The king left her, quite astonished at her answers." The love of king Edward wandered from queen Philippa but for a short time; yet it was owing to the high principles of Katherine the Fair that he never swerved into the commission of evil.[1]

Queen Philippa, attired in the august robes of the new order of the Garter,[2] and attended by the ladies whom the gallantry of king Edward associated with his knights,[3] assisted her royal lord in holding the first chapter at Windsor, on St George's-day, 1344. She made her third and last visit to

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[1] Though he appears still to have cherished a chivalric and heroic attachment for the countess, he soon showed that he had resigned what she very properly told him were "villanous thoughts." In proof of this fact we find him, directly, making a two years' truce with the king of Scotland, one of the conditions of which was, "that king David should undertake a negotiation with his ally, the king of France, to exchange the earl of Moray, a prisoner of king Edward, for the earl of Salisbury," then in captivity in the dismal towers of the Chatelet.—Froissart, vol. i., p. 297.

[2] The story that the origin of this order, the order of the Garter, took its rise from an accident that happened to the countess of Salisbury's dress when dancing with king Edward III., must be untrue, since we have seen that the knights of the Blue Garter were confederated by Cœur de Lion long before the countess was born; therefore the Garter was a part of the order that had been devised many years previously to the era of king Edward. But that the countess of Salisbury was considered the heroine of the newly revived order, we have the express words of Froissart, as follows: "You have all heard how passionately king Edward was smitten with the charms of that noble lady, Katherine countess of Salisbury. Out of affection to the said lady, and his desire to see her, he proclaimed a great feast in August 1343. He commanded all his own lords and knights should be there without fail, and he expressly ordered the earl of Salisbury to bring the lady his wife, with as many young ladies as she could collect to attend her. The earl very cheerfully complied with the king's request, *for he thought no evil*, and his good lady dared not say nay. She came, however, much against her will, for she guessed the reason which made the king so earnest for her attendance, but was afraid to discover it to her husband, intending, by her conduct and conversation, to make the king change his opinion." Froissart likewise adds, "that all the ladies and damsels who assisted at the first convocation of the order of the Garter came superbly dressed, excepting the countess of Salisbury, who attended the festival dressed as plainly as possible: she did not wish the king to admire her, for she had no intention to obey him *in any thing evil* that might tend to the dishonour of her dear lord." Froissart's repetition of the expression "any thing evil," is certainly in allusion to the mysterious motto of the order; indeed, the words of this motto are a mere variation of the same words in the French copies of Froissart.

[3] For several ages after the institution of the order of the Garter, every knight was accompanied by his lady, who was considered to belong to it. Sir Harris Nicolas, in his admirable work on the order of the Garter, fully proves that the ladies of the knights wore its badge. Several monuments still exist where it may be seen. Among others, the monumental statue of lady Harcourt, at Stanton-

Norwich in the course of the same year, 1344, tradition says, accompanied by her son Edward prince of Wales, who displayed his early prowess in chivalry by tilting at a tournament proclaimed at his mother's favourite East Anglian city. It is a matter still in dispute by the learned there, whether the queen lodged at the prior's country-house at Trowse-Newton, or at the monastery in the Close. But after her expulsion by the monks of Durham from her lodging in their monastery, it is most likely she resided at the country-house, separately from her son or husband. She was entertained by the citizens of Norwich at an expense of 37*l.* 4*s.* 6½*d.*[1]

Philippa kept the birth-day of her mighty lord with great festivity at Woodstock in the year 1345.[2] Here, in that sylvan palace, where she had spent the first years of her happy wedlock, did she find herself, in middle life, surrounded by a train of beautiful children, at the head of whom was Edward prince of Wales, then on the eve of winning his vast meed of renown. Philippa's *protégé*, Chaucer, has in these elegant lines described one lovely feature of the favourite retreat of his royal mistress. He speaks of a maple—

> ". . . . that is fair and green,
> Before the chamber windows of the queen
> At Woodstock."

Harcourt, displays the order of the Garter, with the celebrated motto on the left arm. She was born a Byron, and married sir Robert Harcourt, elected knight in 1463. The effigy of the duchess of Suffolk, grand-daughter to Chaucer, at Ewelme church, has the garter and motto buckled round the left arm, not as an armlet, but as a bracelet. The lady Tankerville, whose statue was lately at St. Katherine's by the Tower, had the same noble badge on her left arm. If the ladies companions of this noble order were restored according to the original institution of Edward III. and Philippa, how much splendour would such improvement add to the court of our fair queen! The Garter-robes of queen Philippa are charged in the wardrobe accounts. Exchequer Rolls.

[1] Blomfield's Norwich. We owe thanks to the learned labours of Richard Hart, esq., who has carefully sifted the evidences relative to the queen's visits to Norwich.

[2] Walsingham.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT,

QUEEN OF EDWARD III.

CHAPTER II.

Queen Philippa left regent of England—Battle of Cressy—Queen's uncles—Siege of Calais—Scotch invasion—Queen defends England—Queen's exhortation to the army—Her victory of Neville's-Cross—King David captured—Queen returns to London—Sails with many ladies to Calais—Burghers of Calais doomed to death by Edward—Philippa's intercession—Birth of princess Margaret—Edward and Philippa return to England—Betrothment of the queen's second daughter—Death of the princess—King Edward's letters—Queen's younger children—Philippa's tournament at Norwich—Queen's objections to the marriage of the Black Prince—Queen receives royal prisoners—Dialogue with Du Guesclin—Queen goes to France—Marriage of the Black Prince—Queen's reception of King John at Eltham—Alliances of royal family—Philippa's fatal illness—Death-bed—Tomb—Epitaph—Benefactions—Queen's college, Oxford—Pensions to her women—Alice Perrers—Queen's supposed confession—Virtues of queen Philippa.

In the first years of her marriage, queen Philippa had been the constant attendant on her husband in his campaigns; the annals of the year 1346 display her character in a more brilliant light, as the sagacious ruler of his kingdom and the victorious leader of his army. After the order of the Garter had been fully established, king Edward reminded his valiant knights and nobles that, with him, they made a vow to assist distressed ladies; he then specified that the countess de Montfort particularly required the aid of his chivalry, for her lord was held in captivity by Philip de Valois in the towers of the Louvre, while the countess was endeavouring to uphold the cause of her infant son against the whole power of France. He signified his intention of giving his personal support to the heroic countess, and of leaving queen Philippa as regent of England during his absence.

On St. John the Baptist's-day the king took leave of queen Philippa, appointing the earl of Kent as her assistant in the government of England. The name of her young son Lionel,[1] a child of eight years old, was associated with his mother in the regency. Philippa bade farewell to the darling of her heart, her son Edward, then in his sixteenth year. This young hero accompanied his royal sire, in order to win his spurs on the soil of France. The exploits of the heroic boy are well known; but it is not quite so well known that he was opposed at the field of Cressy to his mother's nearest connexions,—to her uncle, Philip of Valois, and even to sir John of Hainault, that favourite relative who had ever been treated by the queen as if he were her father. In the true spirit of a mercenary soldier, sir John had left the service of his niece's husband, in whose employment he had spent the best part of his life, merely because the king of France gave him a higher salary! The first English military despatch ever written was addressed to queen Philippa and her council by Michael Northborough, king Edward's warlike chaplain: it contains a most original and graphic detail of the battle of Cressy. It is dated at the siege before the town of Calais, for the battle of Cressy was but an interlude of that famous siege.

It was now Philippa's turn to do battle-royal with a king. As a diversion in favour of France, David of Scotland advanced into England a fortnight after the battle of Cressy, and burned the suburbs of York. At this juncture Philippa herself hastened to the relief of her northern subjects. Froissart has detailed with great spirit the brilliant conduct of the queen at this crisis: "The queen of England, who was very anxious to defend her kingdom, in order to show she was in earnest about it, came herself to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. She took up her residence there to wait for her forces. On the morrow the king of Scots, with full forty thousand men, advanced within three short miles of the town of Newcastle, [Durham]: he sent to inform the queen that, 'If her men were willing to come forth from the town, he would wait and give them battle.' Philippa answered, 'That she accepted his offer, and that her barons would risk their lives for the realm of their lord the king.'"

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[1] This child sat on the throne when parliaments were held.

The queen's army drew up in order for battle at Neville's-Cross. Philippa advanced among them mounted on her white charger, and entreated her men to do their duty well in defending the honour of their lord the king, and urged them "for the love of God to fight manfully." They promised her "that they would acquit themselves loyally to the utmost of their power, and perhaps better than if the king had been there in person." The queen then took her leave of them, and recommended them "to the protection of God and St. George." There is no vulgar personal bravado of the fighting woman in the character of Philippa. Her courage was wholly moral courage, and her feminine feelings of mercy and tenderness led her, when she had done all that a great queen could do by encouraging her army, to withdraw from the work of carnage, and pray for her invaded kingdom while the battle joined.

The English archers gained the battle, which was fought on the lands of lord Neville.[1] King David was taken prisoner on his homeward retreat, but not without making the most gallant resistance. "When the queen of England (who had tarried in Newcastle while the battle was fought) heard that her army had won the victory, she mounted on her white palfrey, and went to the battle-field. She was informed on the way that the king of Scots was the prisoner of a squire named John Copeland, who had rode off with him, no one knew whither.[2] The queen ordered him to be sought out, and told 'that he had done what was not agreeable to her, in carrying off her prisoner without leave.' All the rest of the day the queen and her army remained on the battle-field they had won, and then returned to Newcastle for the night."

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[1] The Saturday before Michaelmas-day, 1346; fifteen thousand Scots were slain. There is reason to suppose that where Froissart names Newcastle, the word should be Durham, since the English army certainly mustered in the bishop's park at Auckland, and Neville's-Cross itself is distant but one mile west of Durham.

[2] Knighton says he lodged him in the strong fortress of Bamborough. King David was determined to provoke Copeland to kill him, knowing the miseries his captivity would cause his country. His resistance was terrific; he dashed his gauntlet on Copeland's mouth when called on to surrender, and knocked out several of his teeth. Copeland kept his temper, and succeeded in capturing him alive.

Next day Philippa wrote with her own hand to John Copeland, commanding him to surrender the king of Scots to her. John answered in a manner most contumacious to the female majesty then swaying the sceptre of England with so much ability and glory. He replied to Philippa, that "He would not give up his royal prisoner to woman or child,[1] but only to his own lord king Edward, for to him he had sworn allegiance, and not to any woman." There spoke the haughty spirit of feudality, which disdained to obey a female regent, although then encamped on a victorious field. The queen was greatly troubled at the obstinacy of this northern squire, and scarcely knew how to depend on the assurance he added, bidding her knight tell the queen, "she might depend on his taking good care of king David." In this dilemma, Philippa wrote letters to the king her husband, which she sent off directly to Calais. In these letters she informed him of the state of his kingdom.

The king then ordered John Copeland to come to him at Calais, who, having placed his prisoner in a strong castle in Northumberland, set out, and landed near Calais. When the king of England saw the squire, he took him by the hand, saying, "Ha! welcome, my squire, who by thy valour hast captured mine adversary, the king of Scots!" John Copeland fell on one knee, and replied, "If God, out of his great kindness, has given me the king of Scotland, and permitted me to conquer him in arms, no one ought to be jealous of it; for God can, if he pleases, send his grace to a poor squire as well as to a great lord. Sire, do not take it amiss if I did not surrender king David to the orders of my lady queen, for I hold my lands of *you*, and not of *her*, and my oath is to you, and not to her, unless, indeed, through choice." King Edward answered, "John, the loyal service you have done us, and our esteem for your valour *is* so great, that it may well serve you as an excuse, and shame fall on all those who bear you any ill-will. You will now return home, and take your prisoner, the king of Scotland, and convey him to my wife; and by way of remuneration, I assign lands, as near your house as you can choose them, to the amount of 500*l.* a-year, for you and your heirs."[1]

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[1] Philippa was associated with the young Prince Lionel in the regency.

John Copeland left Calais the third day after his arrival, and returned to England. When he was come home, he assembled his friends and neighbours, and, in company with them, took the king of Scots and carried him to York, where he presented him, in the name of king Edward, to queen Philippa, and made such excuses that she was satisfied. And great magnanimity Philippa displayed in being content with the happy result. How many women would have borne an inextinguishable hatred to John Copeland for a far less offence than refusing obedience to a delegated sceptre! Philippa lodged David in the Tower of London: he was conducted, by her orders, in grand procession, through the streets, mounted on a tall black war-horse, that every one might recognise his person, in case of escape. Next day she sailed for Calais, and landed three days before All Saints.[2] The arrival of Philippa occasioned a stir of gladness in the besieging camp. Her royal lord held a grand court to welcome his victorious queen, and made a magnificent fête for her ladies. Philippa brought with her the flower of the female nobility of England, many ladies being anxious to accompany her to Calais, in order to see fathers, husbands, and brothers, all engaged at this famous siege.

While queen Philippa was encamped with her royal lord before Calais, the young count of Flanders, who had been kept by Edward in his army as a sort of captive, ran away to the king of France, to avoid his marriage engagements with the princess-royal,—a circumstance which caused great grief and indignation to the queen and her family. But the conduct of the young lord of Flanders can scarcely excite wonder; for Edward III., certainly forgetting *son métier du roi*, was in a strong league with the count's rebellious subject, the brewer Von Artavelt, who, under pretence of reform, had overturned the government of Flanders,[1] and delivered up its count to the king of England, the states of Flanders having betrothed him to the eldest daughter of Edward without consulting his inclinations.[2] The young count at last requested an interview with his betrothed. What passed is not known, but the young couple seemed on the most friendly terms with each other; and the queen, supposing the charms of the young Isabella had captivated the unwilling heart of count Louis, with her usual generosity requested he might be left unguarded, fancying he would remain Isabella's willing prisoner. But the escape of the count followed soon after, to the great exasperation of Edward III. As Isabella afterwards made a love-match, the whole scheme had probably been concerted between her and her betrothed, for life, in the fourteenth century, was an acted romance.

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[1] Copeland was likewise made a knight-banneret: he was afterwards sheriff of Northumberland and warden of Berwick.

[2] October 29th.

Meantime, the brave defenders of Calais were so much reduced by famine as to be forced to capitulate. At first Edward resolved to put them all to the sword. By the persuasions of sir Walter Mauny he somewhat relaxed from his bloody intentions. "He bade sir Walter," says Froissart, "return to Calais with the following terms: 'Tell the governor of Calais that the garrison and inhabitants shall be pardoned excepting six of the principal citizens, who must surrender themselves to death, with ropes round their necks, bareheaded and barefooted, bringing the keys of the town and castle in their hands.' Sir Walter returned to the brave governor of Calais, John de Vienne, who was waiting for him on the battlements, and told him all he had been able to gain from the king. The lord of Vienne went to the market-place, and caused the bell to be rung, upon which all the inhabitants assembled in the town-hall. He then related to them what he had said, and the answers he had received, and that he could not obtain better conditions. Then they broke into lamentations of grief and despair, so that the hardest heart would have had compassion on them; and their valiant governor, lord de Vienne, wept bitterly. After a short pause, the most wealthy citizen of Calais, by name Eustace St. Pierre, rose up and said, 'Gentlemen, both high and low, it would be pity to suffer so many of our countrymen to die through famine: it would be highly meritorious in the eyes of our Saviour if such misery could be prevented. If I die to serve my dear townsmen, I trust I shall find grace before the tribunal of God. I name myself first of the six.'

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[1] Queen Philippa, when in Flanders, stood godmother to the son of Edward's democratic ally, afterwards the famous Philip von Artavelde. "To this infant," says the chronicler, "she gave at the font her own name of Philip."

[2] Froissart.

"When Eustace had done speaking, his fellow-citizens all rose up and almost adored him, casting themselves on their knees with tears and groans. Then another citizen rose up, and said he would be the second to Eustace; his name was John Daire: after him, James Wisant, who was very rich in money and lands, and kinsman to Eustace and John. His example was followed by Peter Wisant, his brother: two others[1] then offered themselves, which completed the number demanded by king Edward. The governor, De Vienne, mounted a small horse, for it was with difficulty he could walk, and conducted them through the gate to the barriers. He said to sir Walter, who was there waiting for him, 'I deliver up to you, as governor of Calais, these six citizens, and swear to you they were, and are at this day, the most wealthy and respectable inhabitants of the town. I beg of you, gentle sir, that of your goodness you would beseech the king that they may not be put to death.'—'I cannot answer what the king will do with them,' replied sir Walter; 'but you may depend upon this, that I will do all I can to save them.' The barriers were then opened, and the six citizens were conducted to the pavilion of king Edward. When sir Walter Mauny had presented these six citizens to the king, they fell upon their knees, and, with uplifted hands, said, 'Most gallant king! see before you six citizens of Calais, who have been capital merchants, and who bring you the keys of the town and castle. We surrender ourselves to your absolute will and pleasure, in order to save the remainder of our fellow-citizens and inhabitants of Calais, who have suffered great distress and misery. Condescend, then, out of your nobleness, to have compassion on us.'

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[1] English tradition declares that one of these was the young son of Eustace St. Pierre.

"All the English barons, knights, and squires that were assembled there in great numbers, wept at this sight; but king Edward eyed them with angry looks, for he hated much the people of Calais, because of the great losses he had suffered at sea by them. Forthwith he ordered the heads of the six citizens to be struck off. All present entreated the king to be more merciful, but he would not listen to them. Then sir Walter Mauny spoke: 'Ah, gentle king! I beseech you restrain your anger. Tarnish not your noble reputation by such an act as this! Truly the whole world will cry out on your cruelty, if you should put to death these six worthy persons.' For all this the king gave a wink to his marshal, and said, 'I will have it so;' and ordered the headsman to be sent for, adding, 'the men of Calais had done him such damage, it was fit they suffered for it.' At this, the queen of England, who was very near her lying-in, fell on her knees before king Edward, and with tears said, 'Ah, gentle sir! sithence I have crossed the sea with great peril to see you, I have never asked you one favour; now I most humbly ask as a gift, for the sake of the Son of the blessed Mary, and as a proof of your love to me, the lives of these six men.' King Edward looked at her for some time in silence, and then said, 'Ah, lady! I wish you had been anywhere else than here. You have entreated in such a manner, that I cannot refuse you. I therefore give them you: do as you please with them.' The queen conducted the six citizens to her apartments, and had the halters taken from about their necks; after which she new clothed them, and served them with a plentiful dinner. She then presented each with six nobles, and had them escorted out of the camp in safety."

The French historians, who, from mortified national pride, have endeavoured to invalidate this beautiful incident, pretend to do so by proving, as an inconsistency in the character of Philippa, that she took possession, a few days after the surrender of Calais, of the tenements belonging to one of her *protégés*, John Daire. They have likewise impugned the patriotism of Eustace St. Pierre, because he remained in Calais as Edward's subject. But king Edward granted immunity to all those who swore allegiance to him, and stayed in Calais; while those who chose expatriation, like John Daire, forfeited their tenements, which they certainly could not take with them.[1] Now Froissart has shown that Edward presented his Calisian captives to his queen, to "do with them what she pleased." This transfer gave Philippa rights over their persons and property, which she used most generously in regard to the first, but retained her claims over the possessions in the town of those who refused to become subjects of her husband. The very fact, proved by deeds and charters, that Philippa became proprietress of John Daire's houses, greatly authenticates the statement of Froissart. It would have been pleasant to record that Philippa restored the value of John Daire's tenements; but biography, unlike poetry or romance, seldom permits us to portray a character approaching perfection. Truth compels us to display the same person, by turns, merciful or ferocious, generous or acquisitive, according to the mutability of human passion. The philosophic observer of life will see no outrage on probability in the facts, that Philippa saved John Daire's life one day, and took possession of his vacated spoils the next week.

"The king, after he had bestowed these six citizens on queen Philippa, called to him sir Walter Mauny and his two marshals, the earls of Warwick and Stafford, and said, 'My lords, here are the keys of Calais town and castle: go, and take possession.'[2] Directions were given for the castle to be prepared with proper lodgings for the king and queen. When this had been done, the king and queen mounted their steeds, and rode towards the town, which they entered with the sound of trumpets, drums, and all sorts of warlike instruments. The king remained in Calais till the queen was brought to bed of a daughter, named Margaret."

Three days before Edward and Philippa returned to England, the emperor Louis of Bavaria died, who had married Marguerite of Hainault, her eldest sister. Towards the close of the same year, Edward was elected emperor of Germany,—an honour of which he very wisely declined the acceptance. At this time it was considered that the king and queen of England had touched the height of human prosperity; with the exception of the trifling disappointment in the disposal of the hand of her eldest daughter, the year 1347 closed most auspiciously for Philippa and her warlike lord. But the military triumphs of England brought with them some corruption of manners. Chroniclers note that the jewels which once decorated the nobility of France were transferred to the persons of the English ladies, who, out of compliment to the queen's successful generalship, and the personal heroism of the valiant countess of Montfort, her kinswoman, began to give themselves the airs of warriors; they wore small jewelled daggers as ornaments at their bosoms, and their caps, formed of cambric or lawn, were cut like the aperture of a knight's helmet. But these objectionable caps brought their own punishment with them, being hideously unbecoming. The church was preparing suitable remonstrances against these unfeminine proceedings, when all pride, whether royal or national, was at once signally confounded by the awful visitation of pestilence which approached the shores of England, 1348. This pestilence was called emphatically, from its effects on the human body, 'the black death.' Every household in London was smitten, and some wholly exterminated: nor did Philippa's royal family escape, for the cruel pestilence robbed her of the fairest of her daughters, under circumstances of peculiar horror.

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[1] Eustace was not a soldier, vowed to his banner, like the lord de Vienne, but a burgher, attached by many powerful ties to his town. He was firmly loyal to his prince while Philip could extend kingly protection to his lieges at Calais, but when Philip was forced to leave Calais to its fate, the same necessity obliged Eustace to transfer his allegiance. Expatriation is not the bounden duty of a citizen.

[2] Froissart. The siege lasted from June 1346, to August 1347. Walsingham declares king Edward spared the people of Calais in life and limb,—an observation he would scarcely have made if the contrary had not been expected.

The beauty and graces of the second daughter of Philippa, called the princess Joanna of Woodstock, were such as to be the themes of every minstrel: she was in her fifteenth year when Alphonso king of Castile demanded her in marriage for his heir, the infant Pedro, who afterwards attained an undesirable notoriety under the name of Pedro the Cruel. The princess had been nurtured and educated by that virtuous lady Marie St. Pol, the widowed countess of Pembroke, to whose munificent love of learning Cambridge owes one of her noblest foundations.[1] As a reward for rearing and educating the young princess, king Edward gave the countess, her governess, the manor of Stroud, in Kent, with many expressions of gratitude, calling her "his dearest cousin Marie de St. Pol."[2] The fair Joanna was spared the torment of becoming the wife of the most furious man in Europe, by the more merciful plague of 'the black death.' The royal bride sailed for Bourdeaux at the latter end of the summer of 1348, while her father-in-law, the king of Castile, travelled to the frontier city, Bayonne, with the infant don Pedro, to meet her. King Edward's loyal citizens of Bourdeaux escorted the princess Joanna as far as Bayonne, in the cathedral of which city she was to give her hand to Pedro. On the very evening of her triumphal entry into Bayonne the pestilence, out of all the assembled multitudes, seized on the fair young Plantagenet as a victim: it terminated her existence in a few hours. Her Spanish bridegroom, and the king his father, followed her funeral procession on the very day and hour that she was appointed to give her hand as a bride at the altar of that cathedral wherein she was buried.

The deep grief of the parents of Joanna is visible in the Latin letters written by Edward III. to the king of Castile, to don Pedro, and to the queen of Castile. If the Latinity of these letters will not bear the criticism of the classical scholar, they are, nevertheless, lofty in sentiment, and breathe an expression of parental tenderness seldom to be found in state-papers. "Your daughter and ours," he says to the queen of Castile, "was by nature wonderfully endowed with gifts and graces; but little does it now avail to praise them, or specify the charms of that beloved one, who is—oh, grief of heart!—for ever taken from us. Yet the debt of mortality must be paid, however deeply sorrow may drive the thorn, and our hearts be transpierced by anguish. Nor will our sighs and tears cancel the inevitable law of nature. Christ, the celestial spouse, has taken the maiden bride to be his spouse. She, in her innocent and immaculate years, has been transferred to the virgin choir in heaven, where, for us below, she will perpetually intercede."

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[1] This lady had been rendered a widow on her bridal day, by her newly-wedded lord being killed at the tournament given in honour of his nuptials. The maiden widow never married again, but devoted her great wealth to charity and the promotion of learning.

[2] Fœdera, vol. v.

The queen must have imagined that her royal and handsome progeny was doomed to a life of celibacy, for extraordinary accidents of one kind or other had hitherto prevented the marriages of her daughters. Her heroic son Edward had been on the point of marrying several princesses, without his nuptials ever being brought to a conclusion. A long attachment had subsisted between him and his beautiful cousin Joanna, daughter of his uncle, Edmund earl of Kent, and the lady had remained unwedded till her twenty-fifth year, after being divorced from the earl of Salisbury, to whom she had been contracted in her infancy. Queen Philippa had a great objection to her son's union with his cousin,[1] on account of the flightiness of the lady's disposition. After vainly hoping for the royal consent to her union with her cousin, Joanna gave her hand to sir Thomas Holland; but still the Black Prince remained a bachelor.

After the grand crisis of the capture of Calais, Philippa resided chiefly in England. Our country felt the advantage of the beneficent presence of its queen. Philippa had in her youth established woollen manufactures: she now turned her sagacious intellect towards working the coal-mines in Tynedale,—a branch of national industry whose inestimable benefits need not be dilated upon. The mines had been worked, with great profit, in the reign of Henry III., but the convulsions of the Scottish wars had stopped their progress. Philippa had estates in Tynedale, and she had long resided in its vicinity during Edward's Scottish campaigns. It was an infallible result, that, wherever this great queen directed her attention, wealth and national prosperity speedily followed. Well did her actions illustrate her Flemish motto, *Iche wrude muche*, which obsolete words may be rendered,

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[1] Guthrie mentions the long celibacy of Joanna, 'the fair maid of Kent,' previously to her union with Holland. Froissart speaks of Philippa's objections to the marriage of Edward with his cousin, and very freely enters into some scandalous stories regarding her.

'I labour (or toil) much.' Soon after her return from Calais she obtained a grant from her royal lord,[1] giving permission to her bailiff, Alan de Strothere, to work the mines of Alderneston, which had been worked in the days of king Henry III. and Edward I. From this re-opening of the Tynedale mines by Philippa proceeded our coal-trade, which, during the reign of her grandson, Henry IV., enriched the great merchant Whittington and the city of London.

The queen continued to increase the royal family. The princess Mary, who afterwards married the duke of Bretagne; prince William, born at Windsor, who died in his twelfth year; Edmund, afterwards duke of York; and Blanche, of the Tower,[2] were born before the surrender of Calais; the princess Margaret, and Thomas of Woodstock, afterwards. Edward's presents to his queen on these occasions were munificent. One of his grants is thus affectionately worded:—July 20. The king orders his exchequer to pay "our Philippa, our dearest consort, five hundred pounds, to liquidate the expenses of her churching at Windsor."[3] This was on occasion of the birth of prince William, Philippa's second son of that name.

Philippa did not disdain the alliance of the great English nobles; her objection to the union of Edward, her chivalric heir, with Joanna of Kent, arose solely from disapprobation of the moral character of that princess.[4] Her next surviving son, Lionel, she not only united to an English maiden, but undertook the wardship and education of his young bride, as may be learned from this document:—"January 1, 1347. Edward III. gives to his dearest consort, Philippa, the wardship of the person of Elizabeth de Burgh, daughter to the deceased earl of Ulster, (slain in Ireland,) with her lands and lordships, until Lionel, yet in tender years, shall take the young Elizabeth to wife."[5]

Our queen was nearly as popular at Bristol as she was at Norwich. The Bristolians have carefully preserved several busts of her, sculptured in stone. One of considerable beauty, over the triforium of the cathedral, is the original of our portrait.[1] As it only consists of the head and neck, of course the detail of the costume cannot be given, excepting of the peculiarly elegant crown, which is a low-pointed circlet, surmounted and enriched with flowers and foliage, apparently formed of gems. The easy folds of the waving hair flowing on the queen's shoulders have been struck out by a chisel of no common power: the expression of Philippa's forehead is noble and candid, and that of her features pretty and sweet-tempered. Her age, in the beautiful original bust, does not appear more than twenty-two years.

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[1] Caley's Fœdera. To this grant is added a curious clause, giving permission to Robert de Viteriponte and his heirs to be called kings of Tynedale.

[2] Walsingham. [3] Caley's Fœdera. [4] Froissart, vol. xi. [5] Caley's Fœdera.

A precept of Philippa, May 14, 1354, relating to her claims of queen-gold, establishes by practical proof that her worth of character was sterling, and not merely founded on the flattering tribute of the poets or historians she patronised,—such as Chaucer or Froissart. She desires therein "that her attorney in the exchequer, her dear clerk sir John de Edington, should cause all the writs which have been filed from the search lately made by sir Richard de Cressevill to be postponed until the octaves of Easter next ensuing, to the end that in the mean time we and our council may be able to be advised which of the said writs are to be put in execution for our profit, and which of them are to cease to the relief of our people and to save our conscience. And we will that this letter be your warrant therefore.—Given under our privy-seal at Westminster, the 14th day of May, in the reign of our very dear lord the king of England the twenty-fourth," (1354).[2]

The grand victory of Poictiers distinguished the year 1357. A prouder day than that of Neville's-Cross was the 5th of May, 1357, when Edward the Black Prince landed at Sandwich with his royal prisoner king John, and presented him to his mother after that glorious entry into London, where the prince tacitly gave John the honours of a *suzerain* by permitting him to mount the famous white charger on which he rode at Poictiers, and which was captured with him.[1] At the same time that the queen received her vanquished kinsman, her son presented to her another prisoner, who, young as he was, was far fiercer in his captivity than the king of France: this was Philip, the fourth son of king John, a little hero of fourteen, who had fought desperately by his father's side on the lost field, and had been captured alive with some difficulty, and not till he was desperately wounded.[2] The first day of his arrival at the court of England he gave a proof of his fierceness, by starting from the table, where he sat at dinner with the king and queen and his father, and boxing the ears of King Edward's cup-bearer for serving the king of England before the king of France; "for," he said, "though his father king John was unfortunate, he was the sovereign of the king of England." Edward and Philippa only smiled at the boy's petulance, and treated him with indulgent benevolence; and when he quarrelled with the prince of Wales, at a game of chess, they most courteously decided the disputed move in favour of prince Philip.

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[1] We have to return our grateful thanks to the rev. Mr. Carter of Bristol-cathedral, not only for obtaining permission to copy this representation of our great queen Philippa in the meridian of her life, but for taking trouble and incurring expense in having an accurate cast made from the *triforium* head, and sending it to us.

[2] Madox, Collect. Additional MSS. translated from the original French.

That renowned champion, sir Bertrand du Guesclin, was one of the prisoners of Poictiers. One day, when queen Philippa was entertaining at her court a number of the noble French prisoners, the prince of Wales proposed that Du Guesclin should name his own ransom, according to the etiquette of the times, adding, that whatever sum he mentioned, be it small or great, should set him free. The valiant Breton valued himself at a hundred thousand crowns. The prince of Wales started at the immense sum, and asked sir Bertrand "How he could ever expect to raise such an enormous ransom?"—"I know," replied the hero, "a hundred knights in my native Bretagne, who would mortgage their last acre rather than Du Guesclin should either languish in captivity or be rated below his value: yea, and there is not a woman in France now toiling at her distaff, who would not devote a day's earnings to set me free, for well have I deserved of their sex. And if all the fair spinners in France employ their hands to redeem me, think you, prince, whether I shall bide much longer with you?" Queen Philippa, who had listened with great attention to the discussion between her son and his prisoner, now spoke:[1] "I name," she said, "fifty thousand crowns, my son, as my contribution towards your gallant prisoner's ransom; for though an enemy to my husband, a knight who is famed for the courteous protection he has afforded to my sex, deserves the assistance of every woman." Du Guesclin immediately threw himself at the feet of the generous queen, saying, "Ah, lady! being the ugliest knight in France, I never reckoned on any goodness from your sex, excepting from those whom I had aided or protected by my sword; but your bounty will make me think less despicably of myself." Philippa, as is usual in the brightest specimens of female excellence, was the friend of her own sex, and honoured those men most who paid the greatest reverence to women. Du Guesclin did not over-rate his own ugliness to queen Philippa. His monumental portrait shows him short and corpulent, with the drollest broad face it is possible to imagine: in truth, he gives the idea of an heroic Sancho Panza.

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[1] The white horse was always, in the middle ages, the sign of sovereignty. Giffard mentions the interesting fact, that this white steed was a captive as well as his master.—Hist. of France.

[2] Philipe le Hardi, duke of Burgundy. He was a prince of great integrity, and always faithful to his unfortunate nephew, Charles VI.—Giffard.

The most glorious festival ever known in England was that held at Windsor, in the commencement of the year 1358, for the diversion of the two royal prisoners, John king of France, and David Bruce of Scotland. The Round tower at Windsor, despite of the heavy expenses of war, was completed on purpose that the feast called the 'Round table of the knights of the Garter' might be held within it. The captive kings of France and Scotland were invited to that feast as guests, and sat one on each side of Edward III.: king John and king David tilted at the lists. The interest of the ceremony was further enhanced by the fatal accident which befell the stout earl of Salisbury, who was killed in one of the encounters at the lists. Report says, that king John of France was still more captivated with the beauty of lady Salisbury than king Edward had been, and as hopelessly, for that fair and virtuous woman retired into the deepest seclusion on the calamitous death of her lord.[1] After the Windsor festival, Edward placed king John in an irksome captivity, and prepared for the re-invasion of France.

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[1] Giffard attributes this beautiful anecdote to Joanna, the wife of the Black Prince, and places the incident after the battle of Navarrête. We follow the authority of St. Pelaye, in his History of Chivalry, supported by several French historians. It is the subject of a spirited Breton ballad romance.

Queen Philippa embarked, with her husband, for the new campaign, on the 29th of October, 1359. All her sons were with the army, excepting the little prince Thomas of Woodstock, who, at the redoubtable age of five years, was left guardian of the kingdom,[2] and represented the majesty of his father's person by sitting on the throne when parliaments were held. After Edward had marched through France without resistance, and (if the truth must be spoken) desolating, as he went, a bleeding and suffering country in a most ungenerous manner, his career was stopped, as he was hastening to lay siege to Paris, by the hand of God itself. One of those dreadful thunder-storms which at distant cycles pass over the continent of France,[3] literally attacked the invading army, within two leagues of Chartres, and wreaked its utmost fury on the proud chivalry of England. Six thousand of Edward's finest horses, and one thousand of his bravest cavaliers, among whom were the heirs of Warwick and Morley, were struck dead before him. The guilty ambition of Edward smote his conscience: he knelt down on the spot, and spreading his hands towards the church of Our Lady of Chartres, vowed to stop the effusion of blood, and make peace on the spot with France. His queen, who wished well for the noble-minded king of France, held him to his resolution; and a peace, containing tolerable articles for France, was concluded at Bretigny. The queen, king Edward, and the royal family returned, and landed at Rye, 18th of May, ten days after the peace.

After the triumph of Poictiers, the king and queen no longer opposed the union of the prince of Wales with Joanna the Fair,[4] although that princess was four years older than Edward, and her character and disposition were far from meeting the approval of the queen. Edward and Joanna were married in the queen's presence, at Windsor-chapel, October 10, 1361. After this marriage, King Edward invested his son with the duchy of Aquitaine, and he departed with his bride, in an evil hour, to govern that territory. Froissart, speaking of the farewell visit of the queen, says,—"I, John Froissart, author of these chronicles, was in the service of queen Philippa when she accompanied king Edward and the royal family to Berkhamstead-castle, to take leave of the prince and princess of Wales on their departure for Aquitaine. I was at that time twenty-four years old, and one of the clerks of the chamber to my lady the queen. During this visit, as I was seated on a bench, I heard an ancient knight expounding some of the prophecies of Merlin to the queen's ladies. According to him, neither the prince of Wales nor the duke of Clarence, though sons to king Edward, will wear the crown of England, but it will fall to the house of Lancaster." This gives a specimen of the conversation with which maids of honour in the reign of queen Philippa were entertained,—not with scandal or fashions, but with the best endeavours of an ancient knight to tell a fortune or peep into futurity, by the assistance of the wizard Merlin.

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[1] Dugdale. Milles.

[2] Fœdera, vol. vi.

[3] It was considered that the accounts of this storm had been greatly exaggerated by the chroniclers, till one still more dreadful ravaged France in 1790, and hastened by the famine it brought, the French revolution.

[4] Joanna married the prince a few months after the death of her first husband;

King John, soon after the peace, took leave of the queen for the purpose of returning to France, that he might arrange for the payment of his ransom · he sent to England the young lord de Coucy, count of Soissons, as one of the hostages for its liquidation. During the sojourn of De Coucy in England, he won the heart of the lady Isabella, the eldest daughter of Edward and Philippa. After remaining some time in France, and finding it impossible to fulfil his engagements, king John returned to his captivity, and redeemed his parole and his hostages with this noble sentiment: "If honour were lost elsewhere upon earth, it ought to be found in the conduct of kings." Froissart thus describes the return of this heroic, but unfortunate sovereign:—"News was brought to the king, who was at that time with queen Philippa at Eltham, (a very

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besides their nearness of kin, other impediments existed to their union; the prince had formed a still stronger relationship with his cousin, according to the laws of the Roman-catholic church, by becoming sponsor to her two boys, and holding them in his arms at the baptismal font; and, above all, the divorce of Joanna from the earl of Salisbury was not considered legal. All these impediments were legalized by a bull, obtained some years after this marriage.—Rymer's Fœdera.

magnificent palace the English kings have seven miles from London,) that the captive king had landed at Dover. This was in 1364, the 1st of January. King Edward sent off a grand deputation, saying how much the queen and he were rejoiced to see him in England, and this it may be supposed, all things considered, the king of France readily believed. King John offered at the shrine of Thomas à-Becket at Canterbury, on his journey; and taking the road to London, he arrived at Eltham, where queen Philippa and king Edward were ready to receive him. It was on a Sunday, in the afternoon: there were, between that time and supper, many grand dances and carols, at which it seems the young lord de Coucy distinguished himself by singing and dancing. I can never relate how very honourably the king and queen behaved to king John at Eltham. They afterwards lodged him with great pomp in the palace of the Savoy, where he visited king Edward at Westminster whenever he had a mind to see him or the queen, taking boat, and coming from Savoy-stairs by water to the palace." But king John's health was declining, and he died at the Savoy-palace the same year.[1]

A marriage soon after took place between the elegant De Coucy and the princess-royal. Although an emperor's nephew,[2] this nobleman could scarcely be considered a match for the daughter of Edward III.; but since the escape of her faithless betrothed, the count of Flanders, Isabella had entered into no marriage-contract, and was, at the time of her nuptials, turned of thirty. On occasion of the marriage festivals king Edward presented his queen with two rich corsets, one embroidered with the words *Myn biddinye*, and the other with her motto, *Iche wrude muche*.[3] Prince Lionel at this time espoused the ward of queen Philippa, Elizabeth de Burgh, who brought, as dower, at least one-third of Ireland, with the mighty inheritance of the Clares, earls of Gloucester. Edward III. afterwards created Lionel duke of Clarence. This prince, through whose daughter, married to Edmund Mortimer, the line of York derived their primogeniture, was a handsome and courageous Flemish giant, mild-tempered and amiable, as persons of great strength and stature, by a beneficent law of nature, usually are. Lionel is rather an obscure though important person in English history. Here is his portrait, by the last of our rhyming chroniclers:—

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[1] Knowing his end approaching, king John had certainly surrendered his person, in hopes of saving his country the expense of his ransom.

[2] He was grandson to Leopold duke of Austria, by Katherine, sister to the emperor Albert II.

[3] We owe this curious fact to sir Harris Nicolas's excellent work on the order of the Garter. The language of the words has been disputed, but we beg leave to offer this fact to the consideration of philologists. If a Suffolk peasant of the coast opposite to Holland is asked "what he did yesterday?" when he had had a very hard day's work, he will reply nearly in the same-sounding words in his East-Anglian dialect; viz. "*I wrought muck.*"

"In all the world there was no prince him like.
Of high stature and of all seemliness,
Above all men within the whole king*rike* [kingdom]
By the shoulders might be seen, doubtless.
In hall was he maid-like for gentleness,
In other places famed for rhetoric,
But in the field a lion MARMORIKE."[1]

Death soon dissolved his wedlock. Elizabeth de Burgh, the duchess of Clarence, left a daughter but a few days old, in whose progeny the title to the English crown has centered. She was born and baptized at Eltham-palace, August 16th, the twenty-ninth year of her grandfather's reign.[2] This motherless babe the queen Philippa adopted for her own, and became sponsor to her with the countess of Warwick, as may be seen in the Friar's Genealogy, when mentioning Lionel of Clarence:—

"His wife was dead and at Clare buried,
And no heir had he but his daughter, faire
Philippe, that hight as chronicles specified,
Whom queen Philippe christened for his heir,[3]
The archbishop of York for her compeer;
Her godmother, also, was of Warwick countess,
A lady likewise of great worthiness."

John of Gaunt, the third surviving son of Philippa, married Blanche, the heiress of Lancaster: the princess Mary was wedded to the duke of Bretagne, but died early in life. Edmund Langley, earl of Cambridge, afterwards duke of York, married Isabella of Castile, whose sister his brother John of

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[1] What sort of lion this may be we have not yet ascertained.

[2] Appendix to the fourth Report of Records, p. 135: White tower Record.

[3] The lady Philippa of Clarence was married to Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, in the forty-third year of her grandfather's reign.—White tower Record; fourth Report of Records, p. 135.

Gaunt took for his second wife. The youngest prince, Thomas of Woodstock, afterwards created Duke of Gloucester, married an English lady, the co-heiress of Humphrey de Bohun, constable of England. Margaret, the fifth daughter of Edward III., was given in marriage to the earl of Pembroke; she was one of the most learned ladies of her age, and a distinguished patroness of Chaucer.[1]

Notwithstanding their great strength and commanding stature, scarcely one of the sons of Philippa reached old age; even "John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster," was only fifty-nine at his demise. The premature introduction to the cares of state, the weight of plate-armour, and the violent exercise in the tilt-yard, by way of relaxation from the severer toils of partisan warfare, seem to have brought early old age on this gallant brotherhood of princes. The queen had been the mother of twelve children; eight survived her. Every one of the sons of Philippa were famous champions in the field. The Black Prince and John of Gaunt were learned, elegant, and brilliant, and strongly partook of the genius of Edward I. and the Provençal Plantagenets. Lionel and Edmund were good-natured and brave. They were comely in features, and gigantic in stature; they possessed no great vigour of intellect, and were both rather addicted to the pleasures of the table. Thomas of Woodstock was fierce, petulant, and rapacious; he possessed, however, considerable accomplishments, and is reckoned among royal and noble authors. He wrote a history of the 'Laws of Battle,' which is perspicuous in style; he was the great patron of Gower the poet, who belonged originally to the household of this prince. The queen saw the promise of a successor to the throne of England in the progeny of her best-beloved son Edward. Her grandson Richard was born at Bourdeaux, before she succumbed to her fatal malady.

Philippa had not the misery of living to see the change in the prosperity of her family,—to witness the long pining decay of the heroic prince of Wales, the grievous change in his health and disposition, or the imbecility that gradually took possession of the once-mighty mind of her husband. Before these reverses took place, the queen was seized with a dropsical malady, under which she languished about two years. All her sons were absent on the continent when her death approached, excepting her youngest, Thomas of Woodstock. The Black Prince had just concluded his Spanish campaign, and was ill in Gascony. Lionel of Clarence was at the point of death in Italy; the queen's secretary, Froissart, had accompanied that prince when he went to be married to Violante of Milan. On the return of Froissart, he found his royal mistress was dead, and he thus describes her death-bed, from the detail of those who were present and heard her last words: "I must now speak[1] of the death of the most courteous, liberal, and noble lady that ever reigned in her time,—the lady Philippa of Hainault, queen of England. While her son the duke of Lancaster was encamped in the valley of Tourneham, ready to give battle to the duke of Burgundy, this death happened in England, to the infinite misfortune of king Edward, his children, and the whole kingdom. That excellent lady the queen, who had done so much good, aiding all knights, ladies, and damsels, when distressed, who had applied to her, was at this time dangerously sick at Windsor-castle, and every day her disorder increased. When the good queen perceived that her end approached, she called to the king, and extending her right hand from under the bed-clothes, put it into the right hand of king Edward, who was oppressed with sorrow, and thus spoke: 'We have, my husband, enjoyed our long union in happiness, peace, and prosperity. But I entreat, before I depart, and we are for ever separated in this world, that you will grant me three requests.' King Edward, with sighs and tears, replied, 'Lady, name them: whatever be your requests, they shall be granted.'—'My lord,' she said, 'I beg you will fulfil whatever engagements I have entered into with merchants for their wares, as well on this, as on the other side of the sea: I beseech you to fulfil whatever gifts or legacies I have made, or left to churches wherein I have paid my devotions, and to all my servants, whether male or female: and when it shall please God to call you hence, you will choose no other sepulchre than mine, and that you will rest by my side in the cloisters of Westminster-abbey.' The king, in tears, replied, 'Lady, all this shall be done.' Soon after, the good lady made the sign of the cross on her breast, and having recommended to the king her youngest son Thomas, who was present, praying to God she gave up her spirit, which I firmly believe was caught by holy angels and carried to the glory of heaven, for she had never done any thing by thought or deed to endanger her soul. Thus died this admirable queen of England, in the year of grace 1369, the vigil of the Assumption of the Virgin, the 14th of August. Information of this heavy loss was carried to the English army at Tourneham, which greatly afflicted every one, more especially her son John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster."

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[1] Philippa, in conjunction with her son, John duke of Lancaster, warmly patronised Chaucer. With this queen the court favour of the father of English verse expired. He was neglected by Richard II. and his consort, as all his memoirs will testify. Nor did the union of his wife's sister with the duke of Lancaster draw him from his retirement.

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[1] Froissart, vol. iv. p. 20. Froissart wrote an elegy in verse on the death of his patroness, Queen Philippa, which has not been preserved.

Philippa's words were not complied with to the letter; her grave is not by her husband's side, at Westminster-abbey, but at his feet. Her statue in alabaster is placed on the monument.[1] Skelton's translation of her Latin epitaph, hung on a tablet close by her tomb, is as follows:—

"Faire Philippe, William Hainault's child, and younger daughter deare,
Of roseate hue and beauty bright, in tomb lies hilled here;
King Edward, through his mother's will and nobles' good consent,
Took her to wife, and joyfully with her his time he spent.
Her uncle John, a martial man, and eke a valiant knight,
Did link this woman to this king in bonds of marriage bright:

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[1] Stowe gives names to the numerous images which surround the tomb on the authority of an old MS. At the feet are the king of Navarre, the king of Bohemia, the king of Scots, the king of Spain, and the king of Sicily. At the head, William count of Hainault, Philippa's father; John king of France, her uncle's son; Edward III., her husband; the emperor, her brother-in-law; and Edward prince of Wales, her son. On the left side are Joanna queen of Scots, her sister-in-law; John earl of Cornwall, her brother-in-law; Joanna princess of Wales, her daughter-in-law, and the duchesses of Clarence and Lancaster, the princess Isabella, and the princes Lionel, John, Edmund, and Thomas. On the right side of the tomb may be seen her mother, her brother and his wife, her nephew Louis of Bavaria, her uncle John of Hainault, her daughters Mary and Margaret, and Charles duke of Brabant.

This match and marriage thus in blood did bind the Flemings sure
To Englishmen, by which they did the Frenchmen's wreck procure.
This Philippe, dowered in gifts full rare and treasures of the mind,
In beauty bright, religion, faith, to all and each most kind.
A fruitful mother Philippe was, full many a son she bred,
And brought forth many a worthy knight, hardy and full of dread;
A careful nurse to students all, at Oxford she did found
Queen's college, and dame Pallas' school, that did her fame resound.
The wife of Edward, dear
Queen Philippe, lieth here.
LEARN TO LIVE."

Truth obliges us to divest queen Philippa of one good deed, which was, in fact, out of her power to perform; she is generally considered to be the first foundress of the magnificent Queen's college, at Oxford. It was founded, indeed, by her chaplain,—that noble character Robert de Eglesfield,[1] who with modesty equal to his learning and merits, placed it under the protection of his royal mistress, and called it her foundation, and the 'college of the queen.' Eglesfield took for the motto of Queen's college a Latin sentence, which may be translated,—"Queens shall be thy nurses;" and he recommended it to the protection and patronage of the queen-consorts of England.[2] In the course of history, rival queens will be found vying with each other in its support,—perhaps stimulated to this useful work by Eglesfield's well-chosen motto. Philippa herself, the consort of a monarch perpetually engaged in foreign war, and the mother of a large family, contributed but a mite towards this splendid foundation: this was, a yearly rent of twenty marks, to the sustenance of six scholar-chaplains, to be paid by her receiver. Queen Philippa's principal charitable donation was to the hospital of the nuns of St. Katherine by the Tower. She likewise left donations to the canons of the new chapel of St. Stephen, which Edward III. had built as the domestic place of worship to Westminster-palace. Her portrait, on board, in lively colours, was found among some rubbish in a desecrated part of the beautiful cloisters of St. Stephen.[3] It is far more personable than her monumental statue at Westminster-abbey, which was really taken when that deforming disease, the dropsy, had destroyed every remnant of Philippa's former beauty. The only shade of unpopularity ever cast on the conduct of Philippa was owing to the rapacity of her purveyors, after her children grew up. The royal family was numerous, and the revenues, impoverished by constant war, were very slender; and therefore every absolute due was enforced, from tenants of the crown, by the purveyors of the royal household.[1]

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[1] History of the University of Oxford.

[2] Memoir of Eglesfield, in Hutchinson's Cumberland.

[3] Crowle's Pennant's London, vol. viii., where a coloured print represents this painting.

The damsels of the queen's bedchamber were pensioned by king Edward after her death, according to her request. He charges his exchequer "to pay during the terms of their separate lives, on account of their good and faithful services to Philippa, late queen of England,—first, to the beloved damsel, Alicia de Preston,[2] ten marks yearly, at Pasche and Michaelmas; likewise to Matilda Fisher, to Elizabeth Pershore, to Johanna Kawley, ten marks yearly; to Johanna Cosin, to Philippa the Pycard,[3] and to Agatha Liergin, a hundred shillings yearly; and to Matilda Radscroft and Agnes de Saxilby, five marks yearly."

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[1] These tormenting adjuncts to feudality used to help themselves to twenty-five quarters of corn instead of twenty, by taking heap, instead of strike measure, and were guilty of many instances of oppression in the queen's name. Archbishop Islip wrote to Edward III. a most pathetic letter on the rapacity of the royal purveyors. He says, "The king ought to make a law, enforcing honest payment for all goods needed by his household. Then," continues he, "all men will bring necessaries to your gate, as they did in the time of Henry, your great-grandfather, at whose approach all men rejoiced." He declares, "That he, the archbishop himself, trembles at hearing the king's horn, whether he haps to be in his house or at mass. When one of the king's servants knocks at the gate, he trembles more; when he comes to the door, still more; and this terror continues as long as the king stays, on account of the various evils done to the poor. He thinks the king's harbingers come not on behalf of God, but of the devil. When the horn is heard, every one trembles, and when the harbinger arrives, instead of saying 'Fear not,' as the good angel did, he cries 'He must have oats, and he must have hay, and he must have straw and litter for the king's horses.' A second comes in, and 'he must have geese and hens,' and many other things. A third is at his heels, and 'he must have bread and meat.'" The archbishop prays the king "not to delay till the morrow the remedy for these evils, which were only during the years of the king's father and grandfather; that it is contrary to all laws, divine and human, and on account of it many souls are now in hell."—Archæologia.

[2] Fœdera, vol. vi. p. 648.

[3] Supposed to be Chaucer's wife. She was sister to Katherine Roet, the third wife of John of Gaunt. Her father was an attendant on Philippa, and employed in Guienne: he was from the borders of Picardy,—hence the appellation of his daughter.

The name of Alice Perrers does not appear on this list of beloved damsels; but a little further on, in the Fœdera, occurs a well-known and disgraceful grant. "Know all, that we give and concede to our beloved Alicia Perrers, late damsel of the chamber to our dearest consort Philippa deceased, and to her heirs and executors, all the jewels, goods, and chattels that the said queen left in the hands of Euphemia, who was wife to Walter de Heselarton, knight; and the said Euphemia is to deliver them to the said Alicia, on receipt of this our order." It is to be feared that the king's attachment to this woman had begun during Philippa's lingering illness, for in 1368 she obtained a gift of a manor that had belonged to the king's aunt; and in the course of 1369 she was enriched by the grant of several manors.[1] But we will not pursue this subject: we are not obliged to trace the events of the dotage and folly of the once-great Edward, or show the absurdity of which he was guilty when he made the infamous Alice Perrers the queen's successor in his affections. During his youth, and the brilliant maturity of his life, Philippa's royal partner was worthy of the intense and faithful love she bore him. According to this portrait, Edward was not only a king, but a king among men, highly gifted in mind, person, and genius: "Edward III. was just six feet in stature, exactly shaped, and strongly made; his limbs beautifully turned, his face and nose somewhat long and high, but exceedingly comely; his eyes sparkling like fire, his looks manly, and his air and movements most majestic. He was well versed in law, history, and the divinity of the times: he understood and spoke readily Latin, French, Spanish, and German."

Whilst the court was distracted with the factions which succeeded the death of the Black Prince, and John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, was suspected of aiming at the crown, a most extraordinary story was circulated in England, relating to a confession supposed to be made by queen Philippa, on her death-bed, to William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester,—"That John of Gaunt was neither the son of Philippa nor Edward III., but a porter's son of Ghent; for the queen told him that she brought forth, not a son, but a daughter at Ghent; that she overlaid and killed the little princess by accident, and dreading the wrath of king Edward for the death of his infant, she persuaded the porter's wife, a Flemish woman, to change her living son, who was born at the same time, for the dead princess. And so the queen nourished and brought up the man now called duke of Lancaster, which she bare not; and all these things did the queen on her death-bed declare, in confession to bishop Wykeham, and earnestly prayed him, 'that if ever it chanceth this son of the Flemish porter affecteth the kingdom, he will make his stock and lineage known to the world, lest a false heir should inherit the throne of England.'"[1] The inventor of this story did not remember that, of all the sons of Philippa, John of Gaunt most resembled his royal sire in the high majestic lineaments and piercing eyes, which spoke the descent of the Plantagenets from southern Europe. The portraits of Edward III., of the elegant Black Prince,[2] and of John of Gaunt, are all marked with as strong an air of individuality as if they had been painted by the accurate Holbein.[3]

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[1] Brayley and Britton's Westminster. They, on very good grounds, suppose that Alice had two daughters by the king, for whom these excessive grants were to provide.

The close observer of history will not fail to notice, that with the life of queen Philippa the happiness, the good fortune, and even the respectability of Edward III. and his family departed; and scenes of strife, sorrow, and folly distracted the court where she had once promoted virtue, and presided with well-regulated munificence.

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[1] Archbishop Parker's Ecclesiastical History, and a Latin Chronicle of the reign of Edward III., printed in the Archæologia. Some slur had been cast on the legitimacy of Richard II. by the Lancastrian party. John of Gaunt was then a decided partisan of Wickliffe, and this story seems raised by the opposite party for the purpose of undermining his influence with the common people.

[2] Père Orleans affirms that the prince of Wales, just before the battle of Poictiers, was generally called the Black Prince because he wore black armour, in order to set off the fairness of his complexion, and so to improve his *bonne mine*. It is to be noted that Froissart never calls him 'the Black Prince.'

[3] See the beautiful engravings by Vertue, from originals, in Carte's folio History of England, vol. ii.

Anne of Bohemia

Colburn 1851

ANNE OF BOHEMIA,

SURNAMED THE GOOD,

FIRST QUEEN OF RICHARD II.

Descent of Anne of Bohemia—Letter of the empress Elizabeth—Anne of Bohemia betrothed—Sets out for England—Detained at Brabant—Dangers by land and sea—Lands in England—Her progress to London—Pageants at reception—Marriage and coronation—Queen's fashions and improvements—Queen favourable to the Reformation—King's campaign in the north—Queen's knight murdered—King's brother condemned—Death of the princess of Wales—The queen's favourite maid of honour—Persecutions of the queen's servants—Queen pleads for their lives—Grand tournament—Queen presides—Queen intercedes for the city of London—Her visit to the city—Gifts to her—Her entrance at Westminster-hall—Her prayer to the king—Richard grants her request—Queen's sudden death—King's frantic grief—His summons to the burial—Monument—Inscription—Goodness of the queen.

The ancestors of the princess Anne of Bohemia originated from the same country as the Flemish Philippa; she was the nearest relative to that beloved queen whose hand was attainable, and by means of her uncle, duke Wenceslaus of Brabant, she brought the same popular and profitable commercial alliance to England. Anne of Bohemia was the eldest daughter of the emperor Charles IV. by his fourth wife, Elizabeth of Pomerania;[1] she was born about 1367, at

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[1] The mother of Anne was the daughter of Boleslaus duke of Pomerania, and grand-daughter to Casimir the Great, king of Poland. The empress Elizabeth received on her marriage-day a noble dowry, the gift of her royal grandsire of Poland, amounting to 100,000 florins of gold. Elizabeth espoused the emperor Charles in 1363; the year afterwards she became the mother of Sigismund, after-

Prague, in Bohemia. The regency that governed England during king Richard the Second's minority, demanded her hand for the young king just before her father died, in the year 1380.

On the arrival of the English ambassador, sir Simon Burley, at Prague, the imperial court took measures which seem not a little extraordinary at the present day. England was to Bohemia a sort of *terra incognita*; and as a general knowledge of geography and statistics was certainly not among the list of imperial accomplishments in the fourteenth century, the empress despatched duke Primislaus of Saxony on a voyage of discovery, to ascertain, for the satisfaction of herself and the princess, what sort of country England might be. Whatever were the particulars of the duke's discoveries,—and his homeward despatches must have been of a most curious nature,—it appears he kept a scrutinizing eye in regard to pecuniary interest. His report seems to have been on the whole satisfactory, since in the Fœdera we find a letter from the imperial widow of Charles IV. to this effect; that "I, Elizabeth, Roman empress, always Augusta, likewise queen of Bohemia, empower duke Primislaus to treat with Richard king of England concerning the wedlock of that excellent virgin the damsel Anne, born of us; and in our name to order and dispose, and, as if our own soul were pledged, to swear to the fulfilment of every engagement."

When the duke of Saxony returned to Germany, he carried presents of jewels from the king of England to the ladies who had the care of the princess's education.[1] "The duke of Lan-

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wards emperor of Germany, who was brother, both by father and mother, to queen Anne. The emperor Charles IV., of the line of Luxembourg, was son of the blind king of Bohemia, well known to the readers of our chivalric annals. Though bereft of his sight, the king of Bohemia would be led by his knights, one at each side of his bridle, into the *mêlée* at the gallant fight of Cressy, where, as he said, "he struck good strokes more than one" for his brother-in-law, Philip of Valois. After "charging with all his chivalry" in a tremendous line, with his battle-steed linked by chains to the saddles of his knights, the blind hero perished in this desperate attempt to redeem the "fortune of France." The motto of this brave man and the ostrich plumes of his crest were assumed by the young victor, our Black Prince, as the proudest trophies of that glorious day. Such was the grandsire of Anne of Bohemia.

caster, John of Gaunt, would willingly have seen the king his nephew married to his daughter, whom he had by the lady Blanche of Lancaster; but it was thought that the young lady was too nearly related, being the king's cousin-german. Sir Simon Burley, a sage and valiant knight, who had been king Richard's tutor, and had been much beloved by the prince of Wales his father, was deputed to go to Germany respecting the marriage with the emperor's sister. The duke and duchess of Brabant, from the love they bore the king of England, received his envoy most courteously, and said it would be a good match for their niece. But the marriage was not immediately concluded, for the damsel was young; added to this, there shortly happened in England great misery and tribulation,"[1] by the calamitous insurrection of Wat Tyler.

Richard II. was the sole surviving offspring of the gallant Black Prince and Joanna of Kent. Born in the luxurious South, the first accents of Richard of Bourdeaux were formed in the poetical language of Provence, and his infant tastes linked to music and song,—tastes which assimilated ill with the manners of his own court and people. His mother and half-brothers, after the death of his princely father, had brought up the future king of England with the most ruinous personal indulgence, and unconstitutional ideas of his own infallibility. He had inherited more of his mother's levity than his father's strength of character; yet the domestic affections of Richard were of the most vivid and enduring nature, especially towards the females of his family, and the state of distress and terror to which he saw his mother reduced by the insolence of Wat Tyler's mob, was the chief stimulant of his heroic behaviour when that rebel fell beneath the sword of Walworth.

When these troubles were suppressed, time had obviated the objection to the union of Richard and Anne. The young princess had attained her fifteenth year, and was considered capable of giving a rational consent to her own marriage; and after sending a letter to the council of England, saying she became the wife of their king with full and free will, "she set out," says Froissart, "on her perilous journey, attended by the duke of Saxony and his duchess, who was her aunt, and with a suitable number of knights and damsels. They came through Brabant to Brussels, where the duke Wenceslaus and his duchess received the young queen and her company very grandly. The lady Anne remained with her uncle and aunt more than a month; she was afraid of proceeding, for she had been informed there were twelve large armed vessels, full of Normans, on the sea between Calais and Holland, that seized and pillaged all that fell in their hands, without any respect to persons. The report was current that they cruised in those seas, awaiting the coming of the king of England's bride, because the king of France and his council were very uneasy at Richard's German alliance, and were desirous of breaking the match. Detained by these apprehensions, the betrothed queen remained at Brussels more than a month, till the duke of Brabant, her uncle, sent the lords of Rousselans and Bousquehoir to remonstrate with king Charles V., who was also the near relative of Anne. Upon which king Charles remanded the Norman cruisers into port; but he declared that he granted this favour solely out of love to his cousin Anne, and out of no regard or consideration for the king of England. The duke and duchess were very much pleased, and so were all those about to cross the sea. The royal bride took leave of her uncle and aunt, and departed for Brussels. Duke Wenceslaus had the princess escorted with one hundred spears. She passed through Bruges, where the earl of Flanders received her very magnificently, and entertained her for three days. She then set out for Gravelines, where the earl of Salisbury waited for her with five hundred spears, and as many archers. This noble escort conducted her in triumph to Calais, which belonged to her betrothed lord. Then the Brabant spearmen took their departure, after seeing her safely delivered to the English governor. The lady Anne stayed at Calais only till the wind became favourable. She embarked on a Wednesday morning, and the same day arrived at Dover, where she tarried to repose herself two days."

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[1] Froissart.

The young bride had need of some interval to compose herself, after her narrow escape from destruction. All our native historians notice the following strange fact, which must have originated in a tremendous ground-swell. "Scarcely," says the chronicler,[1] "had the Bohemian princess set her foot on the shore, when a sudden convulsion of the sea took place, unaccompanied with wind, and unlike any winter storm; but the water was so violently shaken and troubled, and put in such furious commotion, that the ship in which the young queen's person was conveyed was very terribly rent in pieces before her very face, and the rest of the vessels that rode in company were tossed so, that it astonished all beholders."

The English parliament was sitting when intelligence came that the king's bride, after all the difficulties and dangers of her progress from Prague, had safely arrived at Dover; on which it was prorogued, but first funds were appointed, that with all honour the bride might be presented to the young king. On the third day after her arrival the lady Anne set forth on her progress to Canterbury, where she was met by the king's uncle Thomas, who received her with the utmost reverence and honour. When she approached the Blackheath, the lord mayor and citizens, in splendid dresses, greeted her, and, with all the ladies and damsels, both from town and country, joined her cavalcade, making so grand an entry into London, that the like had scarcely ever been seen. The goldsmiths' company (seven score of the men of this rich guild) splendidly arrayed themselves to meet, as they said, the 'Cæsar's sister.' Nor was their munificence confined to their own persons; they further put themselves to the expense of sixty shillings for the hire of seven minstrels, with foil on their hats and chaperons, and expensive vestures, to do honour to the imperial bride: and to two shillings further expense, "for potations for the said minstrels."[2] At the upper end of Cheapside was a pageant of a castle with towers, from two sides of which ran fountains of wine. From these towers beautiful damsels blew in the faces of the king and queen gold leaf; this was thought a device of extreme elegance and ingenuity;

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[1] Quoted by Milles.

[2] Herbert's History of the City Companies.

they likewise threw counterfeit gold florins before the horses feet of the royal party.

Anne of Bohemia was married to Richard II. in the chapel-royal of the palace of Westminster, the newly erected structure of St. Stephen. "On the wedding-day, which was the twentieth after Christmas, there were," says Froissart, "mighty feastings. That gallant and noble knight, Sir Robert Namur, accompanied the queen, from the time when she quitted Prague till she was married. The king, at the end of the week, carried his queen to Windsor, where he kept open and royal house. They were very happy together. She was accompanied by the king's mother the princess of Wales, and her daughter the duchess of Bretagne, half sister to king Richard, who was then in England soliciting for the restitution of the earldom of Richmond, which had been taken from her husband by the English regency, and settled in part of dower on queen Anne. Some days after the marriage of the royal pair they returned to London, and the coronation of the queen was performed most magnificently. At the young queen's earnest request, a general pardon was granted by the king at her consecration."[1] The afflicted people stood in need of this respite, as the executions, since Tyler's insurrection, had been bloody and barbarous beyond all precedent. The land was reeking with the blood of the unhappy peasantry, when the humane intercession of the gentle Anne of Bohemia put a stop to the executions. This mediation obtained for Richard's bride the title of 'the good queen Anne;' and years, instead of impairing the popularity, usually so evanescent in England, only increased the esteem felt by her subjects for this beneficent princess.

Grand tournaments were held directly after the coronation. Many days were spent in these solemnities, wherein the German nobles who had accompanied the queen to England displayed their chivalry, to the great delight of the English. Our chroniclers call Anne of Bohemia 'the beauteous queen.' At fifteen or sixteen a blooming German girl is a very pleasing object; but her beauty must have been limited to stature and complexion, for the features of her statue are homely and undignified. A narrow, unintellectual forehead, a long upper lip, cheeks whose fulness increased towards the lower part of the face, can scarcely entitle her to claim a reputation for beauty, But the head-dress she wore must have neutralized the defects of her face in some degree. This was the horned cap which constituted the head-gear of the ladies of Bohemia and Hungary, and in this 'moony tire' did the bride of Richard present herself to the astonished eyes of her female subjects.[1]

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[1] Tyrrell. Walsingham. Rymer.

Queen Anne made some atonement for being the importer of these hideous fashions by introducing the use of pins, such as are used at our present toilets. Our chroniclers declare that, previously to her arrival in England, the English fair fastened their robes with skewers,—a great misrepresentation, for even as early as the Roman empire the use of pins was known, and British barrows have been opened wherein were found numbers of very neat and efficient little ivory pins, which had been used in arranging the grave-clothes of the dead; and can these irreverent chroniclers suppose that English ladies used worse fastenings for their robes in the fourteenth century?

Side-saddles were the third new fashion brought into England by Anne of Bohemia: they were different from those used at present, which were invented or first adopted by Catherine de Medicis, queen of France. The side-saddle of Anne of Bohemia was like a bench with a hanging step, where both feet were placed. This mode of riding required a footman or squire at the bridle-rein of a lady's palfry, and was chiefly used in processions. According to the fashion of the age, the young queen had a device, which all her knights were expected to wear at tournaments; but her device was, we think, a very stupid one, being an ostrich, with a piece of iron in his mouth.[2]

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[1] This cap was at least two feet in height, and as many in width; its fabric was built of wire and pasteboard, like a very wide-spreading mitre, and over these horns was extended some glittering tissue or gauze. Monstrous and outrageous were the horned caps that reared their heads in England directly the royal bride appeared in one. These formidable novelties expanded their wings on every side; till, at church or procession, the diminished heads of lords and knights were eclipsed by their ambitious partners. The church declared they were 'the moony tire' denounced by Ezekiel,—likely enough, for they had been introduced by Bohemian crusaders from Syria.

[2] Camden's Remains. It is possible this was not a device, but an armorial bearing, and had some connexion with the ostrich plume the Black Prince took

At the celebration of the festival of the order of the Garter, 1384, queen Anne wore a robe of violet cloth dyed in-grain, the hood lined with scarlet, the robe lined with fur. She was attended by a number of noble ladies, who are mentioned "as newly received into the society of the Garter." They were habited in the same costume as their young queen.[1] The royal spouse of Anne was remarkable for the foppery of his dress: he had one coat estimated at thirty thousand marks. Its chief value must have arisen from the precious stones with which it was adorned. This was called apparel "broidered of stone."[2] Notwithstanding the great accession of luxury that followed this marriage, the daughter of the Cæsars (as Richard proudly called his bride) not only came portionless to the English throne matrimonial, but her husband had to pay a very handsome sum for the honour of calling her his own: he paid to her brother 10,000 marks for the imperial alliance, besides being at the whole charge of her journey. The jewels of the duchy of Aquitaine, the floriated coronet, and many brooches in the form of animals were pawned to the Londoners, in order to raise money for the expenses of the bridal.

To Anne of Bohemia is attributed the honour of being the first in that illustrious band of princesses who were the nursing-mothers of the Reformation.[3] The Protestant church inscribes her name at the commencement of the illustrious list, in which are seen those of Anne Boleyn, Katharine Parr, lady Jane Gray, and queen Elizabeth. Whether the young queen brought those principles with her, or imbibed them

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from her grandfather at Cressy. The dukes of Austria are perpetually called dukes of *Ostrich* by the English writers, as late as Speed. The device, perhaps, implied a pun on the English mode of pronouncing Austria, or Autriche, which name is derived from the eastern position of that country.

[1] See sir Harris Nicolas, History of the Order of the Garter.

[2] In this reign the shoes were worn with pointed toes of an absurd and inconvenient length. Camden quotes an amusing passage from a quaint work, entitled Eulogium on the Extravagance of the Fashions of this Reign: "Their shoes and pattens are snowted and piked up more than a finger long, which they call 'cracowes,' resembling the devil's claws, which were fastened to the knees with chains of gold and silver; and thus were *they* garmented which were lyons in the hall, and hares in the field."

[3] Fox, the martyrologist, declares that the Bohemians who attended queen Anne first introduced the works of Wickliffe to John Huss: count Valerian Krasinski, in his recent valuable History of the Reformation in Poland, confirms this assertion from the records of his country.

from her mother-in-law, the princess of Wales, it is not easy to ascertain. A passage quoted by Huss, the Bohemian reformer, leads to the inference that Anne was used to read the Scriptures in her native tongue. "It is possible," says Wickliffe, in his work called the Threefold Bond of Love, "that our noble queen of England, sister of the Cæsar, may have the gospel written in three languages,—Bohemian, German, and Latin: now, to hereticate her [brand her with heresy] on that account, would be Luciferian folly." The influence of queen Anne over the mind of her young husband was certainly employed by Joanna princess of Wales[1] to aid her in saving the life of Wickliffe, when in great danger at the council of Lambeth in 1382.[2]

Joanna, princess of Wales, was a convert of Wickliffe, who had been introduced to her by his patron, the duke of Lancaster. Joanna, aided by her daughter-in-law, swayed the ductile mind of king Richard to their wishes.[3] Soon after, the queen was separated from her husband by a war in Scotland. The most remarkable incident of his campaign was the murder of lord Stafford, by the king's half-brother, John

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[1] That Anne's mother-in-law was the active protectress of Wickliffe is apparent from Dr. Lingard's words, vol. iv. p. 189. "Some said that the two bishops were intimidated by a message from the princess of Wales; by Wickliffe himself his escape was considered and celebrated as a triumph." Modern writers have usually attributed this good deed to Anne, but she was too young to do more than follow the lead of her mother-in-law. From Walsingham we find that several knights of the household were accused of Lollardism; from various authorities, we find sir Simon Burley, sir Lewis Clifford, sir John Sturry, and sir John Oldcastle, were more or less accused as disciples of the new doctrine. In a life of Wickliffe, published in Barnard's History of England, it is affirmed, from Walsingham, that when Wickliffe was under trial, a message arrived from the princess of Wales, brought by sir Lewis Clifford, forbidding the council to pronounce an injurious sentence against their prisoner: "Upon which," says Walsingham, "they were as reeds by the wind shaken, their speech became smooth as oil, and Wickliffe was but condemned to silence."

[2] Wickliffe died at Lutterworth, in 1384, and when darker times arose after the death of this beneficent queen, persecution found nought to vent its spite upon, excepting the insensible bones of the "evil parson of Lutterworth," as he was called, when his remains were exhumed and cast into the brook which runs near his village; but if Wickliffe had lived in these days he could not have escaped being called a papist, for he was actually struck for death in the act of celebrating the mass at the altar of his village church; therefore, while living, he was never cut off from the communion of the church of Rome.

[3] Life of Wickliffe, Biogra. Brit.

Holland. Jealousy of the queen's favour, and malice against her adherents, appear to be the secret motives of this deed. Stafford was a peerless chevalier, adored by the English army, and, for his virtuous conduct, in high favour with Anne of Bohemia, who called him "her knight;" and he was actually on his way to London, with messages from the king to the queen, when this fatal encounter took place.[1] The ostensible cause of the murder was likewise connected with the queen, as we learn from Froissart that the archers of lord Stafford, when protecting sir Meles, a Bohemian knight then with the army, who was a friend of queen Anne, slew a favourite squire belonging to sir John Holland; and to revenge a punishment which this man had brought upon himself, sir John cut lord Stafford down without any personal provocation. The grief of the earl of Stafford, his entreaties for justice on the murderer of his son, and, above all, the atrocious circumstances of the case, wrought on king Richard to vow that an exemplary act of justice should be performed on John Holland, (brother though he might be,) as soon as he ventured from the shrine of St. John of Beverley, whither this homicide had fled for sanctuary. In vain Joanna princess of Wales, the mutual mother of the king and murderer, pleaded with Richard, after his return from Scotland, that the life of sir John might be spared. After four days' incessant lamentation, the king's mother died on the fifth day at the royal castle of Wallingford. Richard's resolution failed him at this catastrophe, and, when too late to save his mother, he pardoned the criminal. The aggrieved persons in this unhappy adventure were the friends of the queen, but there is no evidence that she excited her husband's wrath.[2] The homicide who had occasioned so much trouble, departed on an atoning pilgrimage to Syria. He was absent from England during the life of queen Anne, and happy would it have been for his brother if he had never returned.

Anne of Bohemia, unlike Isabella of France, who was always at war with her husband's favourites and friends, made it a rule of life to love all that the king loved, and to consider a sedulous compliance with his will as her first duty. In one instance alone did this pliancy of temper lead her into the violation of justice; this was in the case of the repudiation of the countess of Oxford. "There were great murmurings against the duke of Ireland," says Froissart; "but what injured him most was his conduct to his duchess, the lady Philippa, daughter of the lord de Coucy, a handsome and noble lady; for the duke was greatly enamoured with one of the queen's damsels, called the landgravine.[1] She was a tolerably handsome, pleasant lady, whom queen Anne had brought with her from Bohemia. The duke of Ireland loved her with such ardour, that he was desirous of making her, if possible, his duchess by marriage. All the good people of England were much shocked at this, for his lawful wife was grand-daughter to the gallant king Edward and the excellent queen Philippa, being the daughter of the princess Isabella. Her uncles, the dukes of Gloucester and York, were very wroth at this insult."

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[1] Speed. Froissart.

[2] Froissart.

The first and last error of Anne of Bohemia was the participation in this disgraceful transaction, by which she was degraded in the eyes of subjects who had manifested great esteem for her meek virtues. The offensive part taken by the queen in this transaction was, that she actually wrote with her own hand an urgent letter to Pope Urban, persuading him to sanction the divorce of the countess of Oxford, and to authorize the marriage of her faithless lord with the landgravine. Whether the maid of honour were a princess or a peasant, she had no right to appropriate another woman's husband. The queen was scarcely less culpable in aiding and abetting so nefarious a measure, to the infinite injury of herself, and of the consort she so tenderly loved. There was scarcely an earl in England who was not related to the royal family: the queen, by the part she took in this disgraceful affair, offended every one allied to the royal house of Plantagenet;[1] moreover, the lady whose divorce was attempted, was nearly allied to the house of Austria.

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[1] Froissart gives this high title to this maid of honour, while the English chroniclers brand her with low birth. The Fœdera involves these disputes in further mystery by naming her the *landgravissa*, or landgravine of Luxembourg, a title, it is said, which never existed. The king gives a safe-conduct to this landgravissa to come to England, with all her jewels, chamber furniture, and valuables sent by the empress for the use of his dearest queen, the empress having appointed the landgravissa her daughter's lady of the bedchamber.

The storm of popular indignation fell in its fury on the head of the unfortunate sir Simon Burley, the same knight whom we have seen make two journeys to Prague, in solemn embassy, regarding the queen's marriage. This unfortunate knight, who was the most accomplished man of his age, had been foredoomed by his persecutors. The earl of Arundel had previously expressed an opinion to king Richard, that sir Simon de Burley deserved death. "Didst thou not say to me in the time of *thy* parliament, when we were in the bath behind the white-hall, that sir Simon de Burley deserved to be put to death on several accounts? And did not I make answer, 'I know no reason why he should suffer death?' and yet you and your companions traitorously took his life from him!" Such was the accusation by king Richard, when Arundel stood on his trial to pay the bitter debt of vengeance that Richard had noted against him, as the cause of his tutor's death.

The trial of sir Simon Burley was a bitter sorrow to the queen,—perhaps her first sorrow; and as it appears that the expenses of her journey from Germany being left unpaid by the government during the king's minority ultimately led to the disgrace of her friend, the queen must have considered herself as the innocent cause of his death. While the executions of sir Simon Burley and many others of the king's adherents were proceeding in London, Richard and his queen retired to Bristol, and fixed their residence in the castle. A civil war commenced, which terminated in the defeat of the royal troops at Radcot-bridge near Oxford, by the duke of Gloucester and young Henry of Bolingbroke. It was the queen's mediation alone that could induce Richard to receive the archbishop of Canterbury, when he came to propose an amnesty between the king and his subjects: two days and nights did Richard remain inflexible; till at last, by the persuasion of Anne, the archbishop was admitted to the royal presence. "Many plans," says Froissart, "were proposed to the king; at last, by the good advice of the queen, he restrained his choler, and agreed to accompany the archbishop to London."

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[1] After all, the divorce was not carried into effect, for in the year 1389 there is a letter of safe-conduct from king Richard to his dearest cousin Philippa, wife to Robert de Vere.

After the queen returned to London from Bristol, the proceedings of that parliament commenced which has been justly termed by history 'the Merciless.' The queen's servants were the principal objects of its vengeance, the tendency to Lollardism in her household being probably the secret motive. It was in vain that the queen of England humbled herself to the very dust, in hopes of saving her faithful friends. King Richard in an especial manner instanced the undutifulness of the earl of Arundel to the queen,[1] who, he declared, "was three hours on her knees before this earl, pleading with tears for the life of John Calverley, one of her esquires." All the answer she could get was this, "Pray for yourself and your husband, for that is the best thing you can do, and let this request alone;" and all the importunities used could not save Calverley's life.[2] Indeed, the duke of Gloucester and his colleagues established a reign of terror, making it penal for any person to testify fidelity to the king or queen, or to receive their confidence. The duke of Ireland fled to the Low Countries, from whence he never returned during his life.[3]

The intermediate time, from the autumn of 1387 to the spring of 1389, was spent by the young king and queen in a species of restraint. Eltham and Shene were the favourite residences of Richard and Anne, and in these palaces they chiefly sojourned at this time. The favourite summer palace of Anne was named, from the lovely landscape around it, Shene: tradition says that Edward the Confessor, delighting in the fair scenery, called it by that expressive Saxon word, signifying every thing that is bright and beauteous. The king had, during this interval, attained his twenty-second year; and his first question, on the meeting of his parliament, was,

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[1] At the trial of Arundel.

[2] State Trials, vol. i.

[3] King Richard had his body brought to England, and received it with remarkable ceremonials.

"How old he was?" And when they named the years he had attained, he declared that his ancestors were always considered of age much earlier, and that the meanest of his subjects were of age at twenty-one; he therefore determined to shake off the fetters that controlled him. The scene was followed by a sort of re-coronation in St. Stephen's chapel, where the nobility renewed their oaths to him; and it was particularly observed that he kissed those with affection whom he considered as his adherents, and scowled on those who had been the leaders in the late insurrections.

The king was always exceedingly attached to his uncle, the duke of Lancaster, but he had a strong wish to rid himself of his turbulent and popular cousin Henry, the eldest son of that duke, who was born the same year as himself, and from infancy was his rival. On one occasion Henry had threatened the life of the king in the presence of the queen. "Thrice have I saved his life!" exclaimed king Richard. "Once my dear uncle Lancaster (on whom God have mercy) would have slain him for his treason and villany; and then, O God of paradise! all night did I ride to preserve him from death: once, also, he drew his sword on me, in the chamber of queen Anne."[1] King Richard soon after bestowed on the duke of Lancaster the sovereignty of Aquitaine, probably with the design of keeping the son of that prince at a distance from England. The queen held a grand festival on this occasion. Part of the high ceremonial consisted in the queen's presentation of the duchess of Lancaster with the gold circlet she was to wear as duchess of Aquitaine, while Richard invested his uncle with the ducal coronet; but the investiture was useless, for the people of Aquitaine refused to be separated from the dominion of England.

The king's full assumption of the royal authority was celebrated with a splendid tournament, over which queen Anne presided, as the sovereign lady, to bestow the prize,—a rich jewelled clasp to the best tenant or holder of the lists, and a rich crown of gold to the best of the opponents. Sixty of her ladies, mounted on beautiful palfreys, each led a knight by a silver chain to the tilting-ground at Smithfield through the streets of London, to the sound of trumpets, attended by numerous minstrels. In this order they passed before queen Anne, who was already arrived with her ladies: they were placed in open chambers,[1] richly decorated. The queen retired at dusk to the bishop of London's palace at St. Paul's, where she held a grand banquet, with dancing both before and after supper. During the whole of the tournament the queen lodged at the palace of the bishop of London.[2]

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[1] This fray must have taken place in the year 1390, since Henry of Bolingbroke withdrew at that period from England, in order to carry arms against some unconverted tribes on the borders of Lithuania, with whom the Teutonic knights were waging a crusade warfare.—Speed. Count Valerian Krasinski declares that the plain where the English prince encamped in Lithuania is still pointed out by the peasants.

The queen's good offices as a mediator were required in the year 1392, to compose a serious difference between Richard II. and the city of London. Richard had asked a loan of a thousand pounds from the citizens, which they peremptorily refused. An Italian merchant offered the king the sum required; upon which the citizens raised a tumult, and tore the unfortunate loan-lender to pieces. This outrage being followed by a riot, attended with bloodshed, Richard declared "that as the city did not keep his peace, he should resume her charters," and actually removed the courts of law to York. In distress, the city applied to queen Anne to mediate for them. Fortunately, Richard had no other favourite at that time than his peace-loving queen, "who was," say the ancient historians, "very precious to the nation, being continually doing some good to the people; and she deserved a much larger dower than the sum settled on her, which only amounted to four thousand five hundred pounds per annum." The manner in which queen Anne pacified Richard is preserved in a Latin chronicle poem, written by Richard Maydeston, an eye-witness of the scene:[3] he was a priest attached to the court, and in favour with Richard and the queen.

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[1] They were temporary stands erected at Smithfield, in the same manner as on racing courses in the present times.

[2] See col. Johnes' Notes to Froissart.

[3] Lately published by the Camden Society. Maydeston's narrative is fully confirmed by a letter from Richard, in the Fœdera, wherein he declares, "he was reconciled to the citizens through the mediation of his dear wife the queen."

Through the private intercession of the queen, the king consented to pass through the city, on his way from Shene to Westminster-palace, on the 29th of August. When they arrived at Southwark the queen assumed her crown, which she wore during the whole procession through London: it was blazing with various gems of the choicest kinds. Her dress was likewise studded with precious stones, and she wore a rich carcanet about her neck; she appeared, according to the taste of Maydeston, "fairest among the fair," and from the benign humility of her gracious countenance, the anxious citizens gathered hopes that she would succeed in pacifying the king. During the entry of the royal pair into the city their processions were separate. At the king's approach to London-bridge he was greeted by the lord mayor and other authorities, who were followed by a vast concourse of men, women, and children, every artificer bearing some symbol of his craft. Before the Southwark bridge-gate the king was presented with a pair of fair white steeds trapped with gold cloth, figured with red and white, and hung full of silver bells,—"steeds such as Cæsar might have been pleased to yoke to his car."

Queen Anne then arrived with her train, when the lord mayor Venner presented her with a small white palfrey, exquisitely trained, for her own riding. The lord mayor commenced a long speech with these words:—"O generous offspring of imperial blood, whom God hath destined worthily to sway the sceptre as consort of our king!" He then proceded to hint "that mercy and not rigour best became the queenly station, and that gentle ladies had great influence with their loving lords: moreover, he entered into a discussion on the merits of the palfrey presented to her by the city; he commended its beauty, its docility, and the convenience of its ambling paces, and the magnificence of its purple housings." After the animal had been graciously accepted by the queen, she passed over London-bridge to its portal on the city side; but some of her maids of honour, who were following her in two wagons, or charrettes,[1] were not quite so fortunate in their progress over the bridge. Old London-bridge was, in the fourteenth century, and for some ages after, no such easy defile for a large influx of people to pour through: though not then encroached upon by houses and shops, it was encumbered by fortifications and barricades, which guarded the drawbridge-towers in the centre, and the gate-towers at each end. In this instance the multitudes rushing out of the city, to get a view of the queen and her train, meeting the crowds following the royal procession, the throngs pressed on each other so tumultuously, that one of the charrettes containing the queen's ladies was overturned,—lady rolled upon lady, one or two were forced to stand for some moments on their heads, to the infinite injury of their horned caps, all were much discomposed by the upset, and, what was worse, nothing could restrain the laughter of the rude, plebeian artificers; at last the equipage was righted, the discomfited damsels replaced, and their charrette resumed its place in the procession. But such a reverse of horned caps did not happen without serious inconvenience to the wearers, which Maydeston very minutely particularizes.

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[1] These conveyances were neither more nor less than benched wagons, which were kept for the accommodation of the queen's maids of honour: the charrettes

As the king and queen passed through the city, the principal thoroughfares were hung with gold cloth and silver tissue, and tapestry of silk and gold. When they approached the conduit at Cheapside, red and white wine played from the spouts of a tower erected against it; the royal pair were served "with rosy wine smiling in golden cups," and an angel flew down in a cloud, and presented to the king, and then to the queen, rich gold circlets worth several hundred pounds. Another conduit of wine played at St. Paul's eastern gate, where was stationed a band of antique musical instruments, whose names alone will astound modern musical ears. There were persons playing on tympanies, mono-chords, cymbals, psalteries, and lyres; zambucas, citherns, situlas, horns, and viols. Our learned Latinist dwells with much unction on the melodious

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were very gaily ornamented with red paint, and lined with scarlet cloth throughout. They are described in the household books of royalty very minutely: they must certainly have been as jolting and uneasy as carriers' carts.

chorus produced by these instruments, which, he says, "wrapt all hearers in a kind of stupor." No wonder!

At the monastery of St. Paul's the king and queen alighted from their steeds, and passed through the cathedral on foot, in order to pay their offerings at the holy sepulchre of St. Erkenwald. At the western gate they remounted their horses, and proceeded to the Ludgate. There, just above the river bridge,—which river, we beg to remind our readers, was that delicious stream now called Fleet-ditch,—was perched "a celestial band of spirits, who saluted the royal personages, as they passed the Flete-bridge, with enchanting singing and sweet psalmody, making, withal, a pleasant fume by swinging incense-pots; they likewise scattered fragrant flowers on the king and queen as they severally passed the bridge." And if the odours of that civic stream, the Fleet, at that time by any means rivalled those which pertain to it at present, every one must own that a fumigation was appointed there with great judgment.

At the Temple barrier, above the gate, was the representation of a desert inhabited by all manner of animals, mixed with reptiles and monstrous worms, or, at least, by their resemblances; in the background was a forest: amidst the concourse of beasts, was seated the holy baptist John,[1] pointing with his finger to an *agnus Dei*. After the king had halted to view this scene, his attention was struck by the figure of St. John, for whom he had a peculiar devotion, "when an angel descended from above the wilderness, bearing in his hands a splendid gift, which was a tablet studded with gems, fit for any altar, with the crucifixion embossed thereon." The king took it in his hand and said, "Peace to this city! for the sake of Christ, his mother, and my patron St. John, I forgive every offence."

Then the king continued his progress towards his palace, and the queen arrived opposite to the desert and St. John, when lord mayor Venner presented her with another tablet, likewise representing the crucifixion. He commenced his speech with these words: "Illustrious daughter of imperial parents! Anne,—a name in Hebrew signifying 'grace,' and which was borne by her who was the mother of the mother of Christ,—mindful of your race and name, intercede for us to the king: and as often as you see this tablet, think of our city, and speak in our favour." Upon which the queen graciously accepted the dutiful offering of the city, saying with the emphatic brevity of a good wife who knew her influence, "Leave all to me."

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[1] The Temple was then in possession of the Hospitallers of St. John.

By this time the king had arrived at his palace of Westminster, the great hall of which was ornamented with hangings more splendid than the pen can describe. Richard's throne was prepared upon the King's-bench, which royal tribunal he ascended, sceptre in hand, and sat in great majesty when the queen and the rest of the procession entered the hall. The queen was followed by her maiden train. When she approached the king, she knelt down at his feet, and so did all her ladies. The king hastened to raise her, asking,—"What would Anna? Declare, and your request shall be granted."

The queen's answer is perhaps a fair specimen of the way in which she obtained her empire over the weak but affectionate mind of Richard; more honeyed words than the following, female blandishment could scarcely devise: "Sweet!" she replied, "my king, my spouse, my light, my life! sweet love, without whose life mine would be but death! be pleased to govern your citizens as a gracious lord. Consider, even to-day, how munificent their treatment. What worship, what honour, what splendid public duty, have they at great cost paid to thee, revered king! Like us, they are but mortal, and liable to frailty. Far from thy memory, my king, my sweet love, be their offences; and for their pardon I supplicate, kneeling thus lowly on the ground." Then, after some mention of Brutus and Arthur, ancient kings of Britain,—which no doubt are interpolated flourishes of good master Maydeston, the queen concludes her supplication by requesting, "that the king would please to restore to these worthy and penitent plebeians their ancient charters and liberties."—"Be satisfied dearest wife," the king answered; "loath should we be to deny any reasonable request of thine. Meantime, ascend and sit beside me on my throne, while I speak a few words to my people."

He seated the gentle queen beside him on the throne. The king then spoke, and all listened in silence, both high and low. He addressed the lord mayor: "I will restore to you my royal favour as in former days, for I duly prize the expense which you have incurred, the presents you have made me, and the prayers of the queen. Do you henceforth avoid offence to your sovereign, and disrespect to his nobles. Preserve the ancient faith; despise the new doctrines unknown to your fathers; defend the catholic church, the whole church, for there is no order of men in it that is not dedicated to the worship of God. Take back the key and sword; keep my peace in your city, rule its inhabitants as formerly, and be among them my representative."[1]

No further differences with the king disturbed the country during the life of Anne of Bohemia. It is probable, that if the existence of this beloved queen had been spared, the calamities and crimes of Richard's future years would have been averted by her mild advice. Yet the king's extravagant generosity nothing could repress; the profusion of the royal household is severely commented upon by Walsingham and Knighton. Still their strictures seem invidious; nothing but partisan malice could blame such hospitality as the following in a time of famine: "Though a terrible series of plagues and famine afflicted England, the king retrenched none of his diversions or expenses. He entertained every day six thousand persons, most of whom were *indigent* poor. He valued himself on surpassing in magnificence all the sovereigns in Europe, as if he possessed an inexhaustible treasure: in his kitchen alone, three hundred persons were employed; and the queen had a like number to attend upon her service."[2]

While Richard was preparing for a campaign in Ireland, which country had revolted from his authority, his departure was delayed by a terrible bereavement. This was the loss of his beloved partner. It is supposed she died of the pestilence that was then raging throughout Europe, as her decease was heralded by an illness of but a few hours. Froissart says, speaking of the occurrences in England, June 1394: "At this period the lady Anne, queen of England, fell sick, to the infinite distress of king Richard and all her household. Her disorder increased so rapidly, that she departed this life at the feast of Whitsuntide, 1394. The king and all who loved her were greatly afflicted at her death. King Richard was inconsolable for her loss, as they mutually loved each other, having been married young. This queen left no issue, for she never bore a child."

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[1] This reconciliation cost the city 10,000*l*. From some allusions in the king's speech, there is reason to suppose that the riot had been imputed to the Wickliffites.

[2] Walsingham.

Anne of Bohemia died at her favourite palace of Shene: the king was with her when she expired. He had never given her a rival; she appears to have possessed his whole heart, which was rent by the most acute sorrow at the sudden loss of his faithful partner, who was, in fact, his only friend. In the frenzy of his grief, Richard imprecated the bitterest curses on the place of her death; and, unable to bear the sight of the place where he had passed his only happy hours with this beloved and virtuous queen, he ordered the palace of Shene to be levelled with the ground.[1] The deep tone of Richard's grief is apparent even in the summons sent by him to the English peers, requiring their attendance, to do honour to the magnificent obsequies he had prepared for his lost consort. His letters on this occasion are in existence, and are addressed to each of his barons in this style:—

"VERY DEAR AND FAITHFUL COUSIN,[2]

"Inasmuch as our beloved companion, the queen, (whom God has hence commanded,) will be buried at Westminster, on Monday the third of August next, we earnestly entreat that you (setting aside all excuses) will repair to our city of

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[1] The apartments where the queen died were actually dismantled, but Henry V. restored them.

[2] The style of this circular will prove how much modern historians are mistaken who declare that king Henry IV. first adopted that form of royal address which terms all earls the king's cousins; yet the authority is no less than that of Blackstone. This circular of his predecessor was not confined to earls.

London the Wednesday previous to the same day, bringing with you our very dear *kinswoman*, your consort, at the same time.

"We desire that you will, the preceding day, accompany the corpse of our dear consort from our manor of Shene to Westminster; and for this we trust we may rely on you, as you desire our honour, and that of our kingdom.

"Given under our privy seal at Westminster, the 10th day of June, 1394."

From this document it is evident that Anne's body was brought from Shene in grand procession, the Wednesday before the 3rd of August, attended by all the nobility of England, male and female; likewise by the citizens and authorities of London,[1] all clothed in black, with black hoods; and on the 3rd of August the queen was interred. "Abundance of wax was sent for from Flanders for flambeaux and torches, and the illumination was so great that nothing was seen like it before, not even at the burial of the good queen Philippa: the king would have it so, because she was daughter of the emperor of Rome and Germany."[2] The most memorable and interesting circumstance at the burial of Anne of Bohemia is the fact, that Thomas Arundel, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, who preached her funeral sermon, in the course of it greatly commended the queen for reading the holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue.[3]

Richard's grief was as long-enduring as it was acute. One year elapsed before he had devised the species of monument he thought worthy the memory of his beloved Anne, yet his expressions of tenderness regarding her pervaded his covenant with the London artificers employed to erect it. He took, withal, the extraordinary step of having his own monumental statue made to repose by that of the queen, with the hands of the effigies clasped in each other. Our portrait is taken from the queen's statue, which is of gilded bronze. Some plunderers tore off the crown when the venerable abbey-church was made a stable for the steeds of Cromwell's troopers at the death of Charles I. The loss of the head-dress gives a certain degree of forlornness to the resemblance of Anne of Bohemia. She, who used to appear in a horned cap half a yard in height, is forced to present herself with no other ornament than her own dishevelled tresses. Her robe has been very curiously engraved by the artist, with her device of ostriches and her husband's Plantagenet emblem of the open pods of the broom plant, which are arranged on her dress so as to form elegant borders. The skirts of her dress approach the form of the farthingale, which seems originally a German costume. The tomb of Anne was commenced in 1395; the indentures descriptive of its form are to be found in the Fœdera. The marble part of the monument was consigned to the care of Stephen Loat, citizen and mason of London, and Henry Yevele, his partner.

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[1] The Fœdera contains a circular from the king to the citizens nearly similar to the above.

[2] Froissart.

[3] Rapin, vol. i. 701. There is a great contradiction between Rapin and Fox, when alluding to this funeral sermon. Fox, in his dedication of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels to queen Elizabeth, in 1571, uses these words:—"Thomas Arundel, archbishop, at the funeral oration of queen Anne in 1394, did avouch, as Polydore Vergil saith, that she had the gospels with divers expositors, which she sent unto him to be verified and examined." This is the direct contrary to Rapin's assertion; yet the whole current of events in Richard II.'s reign strongly supports the assertion of the early reformers, that Anne of Bohemia was favourably inclined to them. Certain it is that her brother, king Wenceslaus of Bohemia, (though no great honour to the cause,) encouraged the Hussites in her native country.

In the document alluded to above, occur these words:—"And also inscriptions are to be graven about the tomb, such as will be delivered proper for it." The actual inscription is in Latin; the sentiments are tender and elegant, and the words are said to be composed by the king himself: it enters into the personal and mental qualifications of Anne, like one who knew and loved her. The Latin commences—

"Sub petra lata domina Anna jacet tumulata," &c.

The following is a literal translation:[1]—

"Under this stone lies Anna, here entombed,
Wedded in this world's life to the second Richard.
To Christ were her meek virtues devoted,
His poor she freely fed from her treasures;
Strife she assuaged, and swelling feuds appeased,
Beauteous her form, her face surpassing fair.
On July's seventh day, thirteen hundred ninety-four,
All comfort was bereft, for through irremediable sickness
She passed away into eternal joys."

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[1] There likewise hung a tablet, in Latin, on the hearse. Skelton has translated it in his usual vulgar jingle. As the more interesting epitaph is given, the tablet verses are omitted, but they may be seen in Stowe.

Richard departed for Ireland soon after the burial of Anne, but his heart was still bleeding for the loss of his queen; although her want of progeny was one of the principal causes of the troubles of his reign, he mourned for her with the utmost constancy of affection. Frequently, when he was in his council-chamber at Dublin, if any thing accidentally recalled her to his thoughts, he would burst into tears, rise, and suddenly leave the room.[1]

"The year of her death," says Walsingham, "was notable for splendid funerals. Constance duchess of Lancaster, a lady of great innocency of life, died then; and her daughter-in-law, the co-heiress of Hereford, wife of Henry of Bolingbroke and mother of his children, died in the bloom of life. She was followed to the tomb by Isabel duchess of York, second daughter to Pedro the Cruel, a lady noted for her over-fineness and delicacy, yet at her death showing much penitence for her pestilent vanities. But the grief for all these deaths by no means equalled that of the king for his own queen Anne, whom he loved even to madness." The people of England likewise deeply regretted this benignant and peace-loving queen, and long hallowed her memory by the simple yet expressive appellation of "good queen Anne."[2]

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[1] Burton's Irish History.

[2] A letter written by Anne of Bohemia is preserved in the archives of Queen's college, Oxford, in favour of learning. We have received this intimation from Mr. Halliwell, whose learned and intelligent labours in the Camden Society are well known.

END OF VOL. I.

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